GREAT WESTERN SERIES

OLIVER OPTIC

William T. Adams

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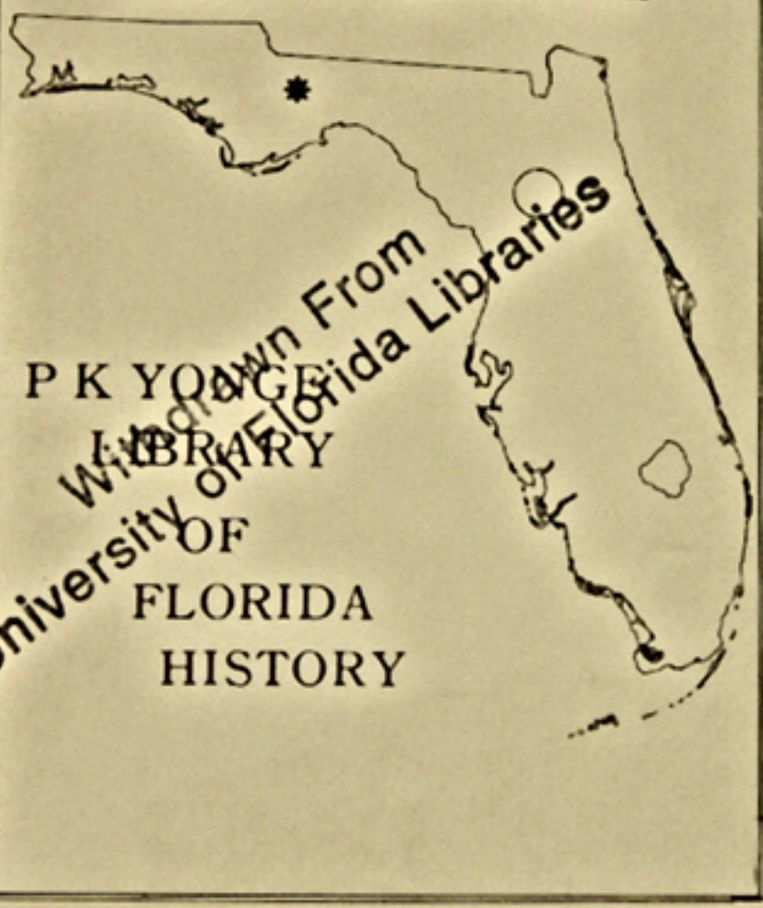

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The Great Western Series

DOWN SOUTH

OR

YACHT ADVENTURES IN FLORIDA

BY

Adams, Wm. Taylor

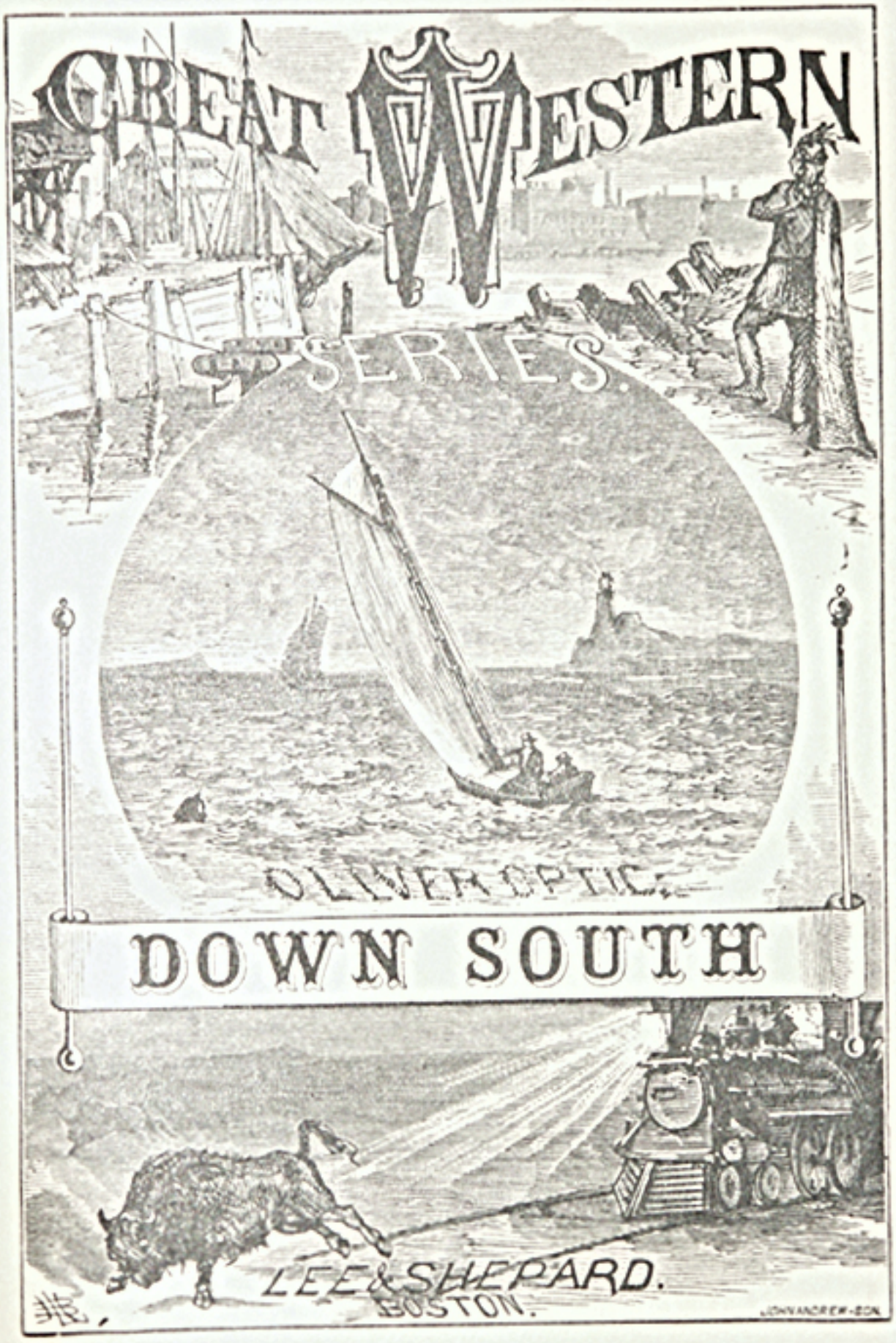
OLIVER OPTIC

AUTHOR OF YOUNG AMERICA ABROAD THE ARMY AND NAVY SERIES THE WOODVILLE SERIES THE STARRY FLAG SERIES THE BOAT CLUB STORIES THE LAKE SHORE SERIES THE UPWARD AND ONWARD SERIES THE YACHT CLUB SERIES THE RIVERDALE STORIES ETC.

WITH EIGHT ILLUSTRATIONS

BOSTON
LEE AND SHEPARD PUBLISHERS
NEW YORK CHARLES T. DILLINGHAM

NIGHT SCENE ON THE OCKLAWAHA. Page 283.


GREAT WESTERN
SERIES.
OLIVER OPTIC.
DOWN SOUTH
LEE & SHEPARD.
BOSTON.

THE GREAT WESTERN SERIES.

GOING WEST; OR, THE PERILS OF A POOR BOY.

OUT WEST; OR, ROUGHING IT ON THE GREAT LAKES.

LAKE BREEZES; OR, THE CRUISE OF THE SYLVANIA.

GOING SOUTH; OR, YACHTING ON THE ATLANTIC COAST.

DOWN SOUTH; OR, YACHT ADVENTURES IN FLORIDA.

UP THE RIVER; OR, YACHTING ON THE MISSISSIPPI.

LEE AND SHEPARD, Publishers, Boston.

TO MY YOUNG FRIEND,

WILFORD L. WRIGHT,

OF CAIRO, ILL.,

EX-PRESIDENT OF THE NATIONAL AMATEUR PRESS ASSOCIATION,
WHO HAD THE COURAGE AND THE SELF-DENIAL TO
RESIGN HIS OFFICE IN ORDER TO PROMOTE
HIS OWN AND OTHERS' WELFARE,

This Book

IS AFFECTIONATELY DEDICATED.

PREFACE.

"DOWN SOUTH" is the fifth and last volume but one of the "Great Western Series." The action of the story is confined entirely to Florida; and this fact may seem to belie the title of the Series. But the young yachtman still maintains his hold upon the scenes of his earlier life in Michigan, and his letters come regularly from that State. If he were old enough to vote, he could do so only in Michigan; and therefore he has not lost his right to claim a residence there during his temporary sojourn in the South. Besides, half his ship's company are Western boys, who carry with them from "The Great Western" family of States whatever influence they possess in their wanderings through other sections of the grand American Union.

The same characters who have figured in other volumes of the Series are again presented, though others are introduced. The hero is as straightforward, resolute, and self-reliant as ever. His yacht adventures consist of various excursions on the St. Johns River, from its mouth to a point above the head of ordinary navigation, with a run across to Indian River, on the sea-coast, a trip up the Ocklawaha, to the Lake Country of Florida, and shorter runs up the smaller streams. The yachtmen and his passengers try their

hand at shooting alligators as well as more valuable game in the "sportsman's paradise" of the South, and find excellent fishing in both fresh and salt water.

Apart from the adventures incident to the cruise of the yacht in so interesting a region as Florida, the volume, like its predecessors in the Series, has its own story, relating to the life-history of the hero. But his career mingles with the events peculiar to the region in which he journeys, and many of his associates are men of the "sunny South." In any clime, he is the same young man of high aims and noble purposes. The remaining volume will follow him in his cruise on the Gulf of Mexico, and up the Mississippi.

DORCHESTER, MASS., August 25, 1880.

CONTENTS.

CHAPTER I. PAGE

Making a Florida Port 13

CHAPTER II.

Our Liberal Passengers 23

CHAPTER III.

A Native Floridian 33

CHAPTER IV.

A Trip up the San Sebastian 43

CHAPTER V.

Saved from the Burning House 53

CHAPTER VI.

Moonlight and Music on Board 63

CHAPTER VII.

The Enemy in a New Business 73

CHAPTER VIII.

A Disagreeable Room-Mate 83

CHAPTER IX. PAGE

A Battle with the Serpent 93

CHAPTER X.

The Fellow in the Lock-up 103

CHAPTER XI.

The Hon. Pardon Tiffany's Warning . . . 113

CHAPTER XII.

Suggestions of another Conspiracy . . . 123

CHAPTER XIII.

Mr. Cobbington and his Pet Rattlesnake . . 133

CHAPTER XIV.

The Excursion to Fort George Island . . . 143

CHAPTER XV.

A War of Words 153

CHAPTER XVI.

Griffin Leeds at a Discount 163

CHAPTER XVII.

Poor Griff and his Counsel 173

CHAPTER XVIII.

The Excursion to Mandarin 183

CHAPTER XIX.

The Adventures of an Invalid 193

CHAPTER XX.

Difficulties in the Way of Departure . . . 203

CHAPTER XXI. PAGE

A Visit to Orange Park 213

CHAPTER XXII.

Fishing in Doctor's Lake 223

CHAPTER XXIII.

Trolling for Black Bass 233

CHAPTER XXIV.

Green Cove Springs and Governor's Creek . . 243

CHAPTER XXV.

Alligator-Shooting on Black Creek . . . 253

CHAPTER XXVI.

On Board of the Wetumpka 263

CHAPTER XXVII.

Up the Ocklawaha to Lake Griffin . . . 273

CHAPTER XXVIII.

An Expedition to Indian River 283

CHAPTER XXIX.

A Mysterious Shot 293

CHAPTER XXX.

Shooting in the Forest and being Shot . . . 303

DOWN SOUTH;

OR,

YACHT ADVENTURES IN FLORIDA.

CHAPTER I.

MAKING A FLORIDA PORT.

"THAT'S it, as true as you live, Captain Alick!" exclaimed Bob Washburn, the mate of the Sylvania, as he dropped the spy-glass from his right eye. "Your dead-reckoning was correct every time."

"I have no doubt you are right, Washburn," I replied, referring to an open volume that lay on the shelf under the forward windows of the pilot-house. "'A square tower, painted white, sixty-eight feet above the sea,'" I continued, reading from the *Coast Pilot*. "But there is another tower, more than twice that height. Ah, here is a note in pencil I made: 'The government has

built a new tower, one hundred and sixty feet high.'"

"That must be St. Augustine Light: there can be no possible doubt of it. It fits the description; and that is exactly where we ought to find it," added the mate.

The Sylvania had been on a ten weeks' cruise to Nassau, Havana, and the Bermuda Islands. In Havana we had been startled by the report of a few cases of yellow fever, and we had hastily departed for the Bermudas, where we had cruised by sea and journeyed by land for a month. The steam-yacht was now on her return to Florida. The weather had been thick and rainy, and for the last two days I had failed to obtain an observation. But we had heaved the log every two hours, though there was rarely a variation of half a knot from our regular speed. We had made careful calculations and allowances for the current of the Gulf Stream, and the result was that we came out right when we made the Florida coast.

We had two sets of instruments on board; and Washburn and myself had each made an independent observation, when the sky was clear enough to permit us to do so, and had ciphered out the latitude and longitude. We had also figured up

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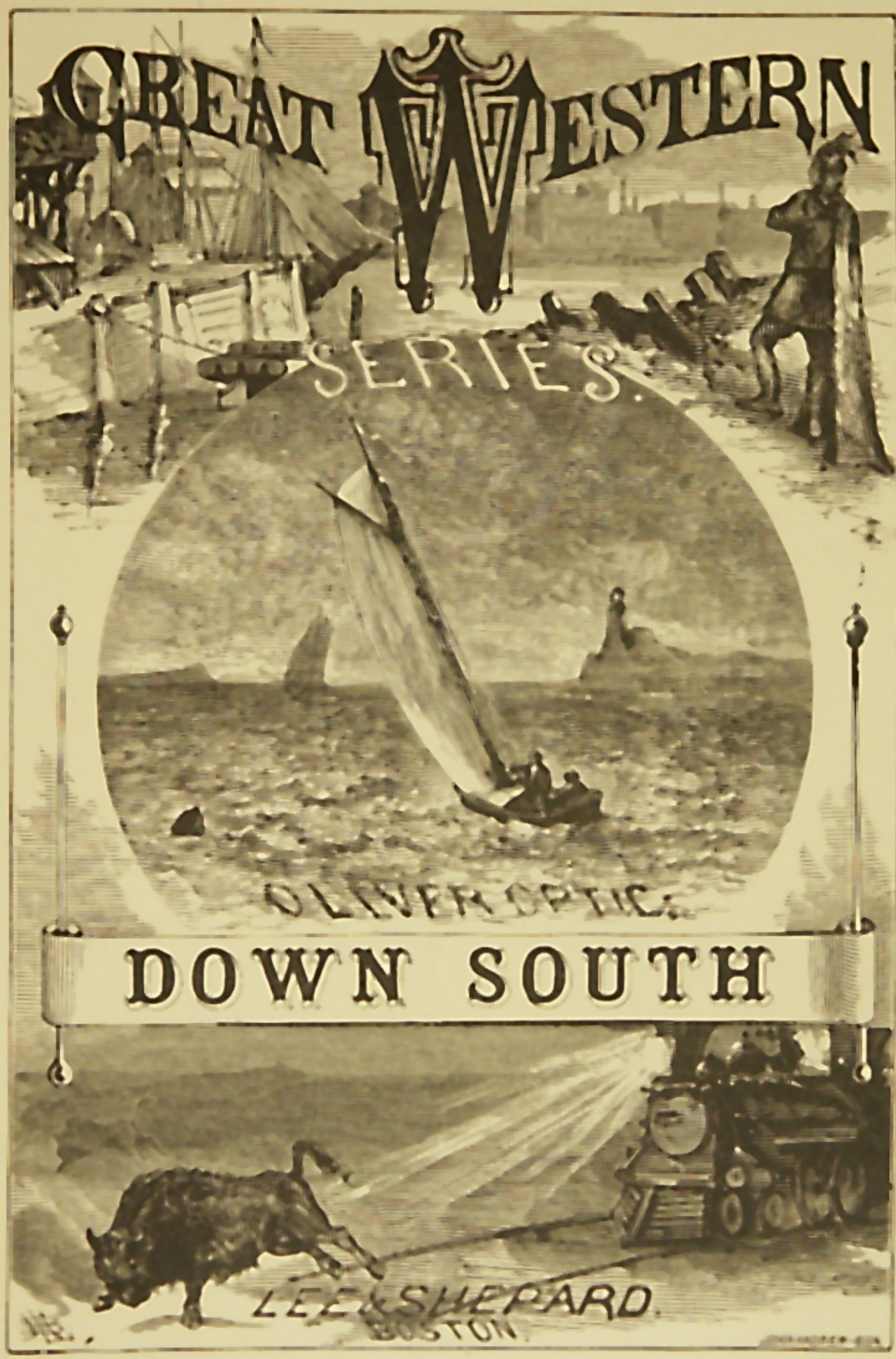
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BOSTON

the dead-reckoning separately, as much for practice as to avoid mistakes. We had varied a little on the dead-reckoning, and it proved that I was the nearer right, as the position of St. Augustine Light proved.

The steam-yacht was under charter for a year to my cousin, Owen Garningham, a young Englishman, who was spending the winter in the South. The after cabin was occupied by four other persons, who were his guests, — Colonel Shepard, his wife, son, and daughter. Miss Edith, the daughter, was Owen's "bright particular star," and she was one of the most beautiful young ladies I ever saw. I may add that she was as gentle and amiable as she was pretty. All the Shepard family were very pleasant people, invariably kind to the ship's company; and though the Colonel was a very wealthy man, none of them ever "put on airs" in their relations with the crew.

Though I did not pride myself on the fact that some of my ship's company had "blue blood" in their veins, I certainly believed that no vessel was ever manned by a more intelligent, gentlemanly, and skilful crew. Robert C. Washburn, the mate, was a college student, who would return to his studies at the end of the voyage. He was one

of the best fellows I had ever met, and was competent to command any vessel, on any voyage, so far at least as its navigation and management were concerned. We were devoted friends; but he received his wages and did his duty as though he and I had had no other relations than those of captain and mate.

Moses Brickland, the chief engineer, was the son of my guardian; and though he was still in his teens, he was competent to build an engine, or to run it after it was built. Bentley F. Bowman, the assistant engineer, was a full-grown man, and had a certificate, besides being one of the best seamen I ever sailed with. Our steward, who was our only waiter until we sailed from Jacksonville in December, had been chief steward of a large Western steamer, and fully understood all branches of his business. He was on the present voyage for the benefit of his health. Buck Lingley and Hop Tossford, the deck-hands, were young Englishmen, belonging to the "first families," and were friends of my cousin Owen; but two more daring, resolute, and skilful young seamen never trod a deck. The two firemen were young machinists I had shipped at Montreal when they were out of work. They were brothers, and the sons of a

Vermont farmer. Washington Gopher, an excellent cook, was a gray-haired colored man, who had rendered the best of service on board.

The Sylvania had come all the way from Lake St. Clair, and it was expected that she would return there. The steam-yacht was my property, so far as a minor could hold property. She had been presented to me by the head of a wealthy Western family for a valuable service I had rendered. I had cruised in the Great Lakes in her, and had had some exciting adventures on board.

I had spent my earliest days in the poor-house of a Maine town, from which a down-east skipper had taken me for the work I could do. But I was afterwards found near Lake St. Clair by my father, after a long and diligent search. But he had been obliged to leave me in charge of Mr. Brickland, my ever faithful friend and guardian, while he went to England to attend to some family affairs. He left property enough to make me independent for life, but it had all been lost by a fire, and I had nothing but the Sylvania.

The steam-yacht afforded me an abundant support while she was under charter to my cousin. Owen was the next heir to me of my father's title of baronet and his large estate. One Pike Car-

rington, my father's solicitor, had persuaded my cousin to enter into some vague conspiracy to "get rid of me in some manner." But, with the aid of Washburn, I had discovered the plot; and having the good fortune to save Owen's life in a storm, before he was fairly committed to the conspiracy, he had become my fast friend.

My cousin's mother was very rich, and it appeared that she gave him money without stint or limit. Carrington had bought the sister yacht of the Sylvania, the Islander, which was to take part in the conspiracy against me, and in which the solicitor had followed the Sylvania to Florida. He had employed Captain Parker Boomsby, the down-east skipper, then settled in Michigan, to command her, and to assist in carrying out his plan. One feature of the scheme was to make me believe that my father was dead; and for months I did believe it. Captain Boomsby claimed that I had been "bound out" to him till I was twenty-one; and he insisted upon the possession of my person and my property as much as though I had been his slave. My father had made an arrangement with him by which he had abandoned all his interest in me, but at the reported death of my father, Carrington had induced him to assert his claim again.

Captain Boomsby had followed me to Florida in the Islander, with the solicitor as his passenger. The former had evidently undertaken "to get rid of me;" but, instead of doing this, he had sacrificed the solicitor. Both he and the lawyer had become hard drinkers, and in the Captain's attempt to wreck me, he had sunk the Islander and drowned his employer. I judged that this would be the end of the conspiracy; and so it was, so far as my cousin Owen and the solicitor were concerned, but not on the part of Captain Boomsby.

I had left my "ancient enemy," as I had a right to regard Captain Boomsby, at Jacksonville when we sailed for the West Indies. I knew that his experiment of making money in Michigan had been a failure, and that he was looking for a more hopeful field of operations in some other section of the country. One of his men told me that he intended to run the Sylvania on the St. Johns River as a passenger boat, and that he felt sure of obtaining possession of her, because, he asserted, he was the rightful owner of her. The paper he had signed was destroyed with the rest of my valuables.

As the steam-yacht approached the coast of Florida I did not even think of my ancient en-

emy. I had left him in Jacksonville, where he was drinking all he could carry, every day. He was terribly bitter and revengeful towards me; for though my father had paid him a considerable sum of money to appease him, rather than to satisfy any just claim he had upon me, he could never be content until he obtained all that could be had, either by fair means or by foul. There was no more principle in him than there was in a paving-stone.

"That is St. Augustine Light," I continued. "There can be no mistake about it, for there is not another light within thirty-five miles of it; and we could not have gone so wide of the mark as that."

"You are right, Captain Alick, as you always are," laughed the mate.

"None of that, Bob! You know as well as the next fellow that I am not always right; I wish I were. How was it about going into St. George?" I replied.

"The exception always proves the rule. I was right by accident that time. But you never go ahead till you are sure where you are going."

"I shall not this time," I added, turning to the *Coast Pilot* again. "'Vessels coming from

the northward will run down till the lighthouse bears west by north, keeping in three fathoms of water,'" I continued, reading from the book.

We kept the Sylvania moving at about half-speed until the tower bore in the required direction; then the mate directed Buck Lingley, who was on watch forward, to heave the lead.

"Mark under water three," reported the deck-hand.

"That's all right," I added. "Now how is the tide?"

We could cross the bar only when the water was above half-tide; and this was an important question. We found from our nautical almanac that it would be half-tide at nine o'clock in the forenoon; and it was not yet seven in the morning by the corrected time. We were as near the coast as I cared to go. We could just make out the square tower of the light-house in the fog, and I was not willing to trust myself in unknown waters near the shore without a pilot. I directed Washburn to stop the engine, and keep a sharp lookout for the drift of the steamer.

Leaving the pilot-house, I went forward, and presently discovered a pilot-boat coming out of the inlet. One of her crew was waving a flag to

the port side from her bow. This meant that we were to bear to starboard. I told the mate to go ahead, bearing to the northward. In a few minutes more we had a pilot on board, whose first question was as to our draft of water. I gave it as nine feet, though it was considerably less when we had nearly emptied our coal-bunkers. The pilot decided that we must wait a couple of hours.

The sun rose at 6.26 on the first day of March, which was just ten minutes earlier than at Detroit. It soon burned off the fog inshore, so that we could see the ancient city of St. Augustine. Our passengers, who had become so accustomed to sea-life that they did not turn out before eight in the morning, soon began to appear. With the pilot at the wheel we went over the bar before nine, and a run of two miles more brought us to our anchorage off the sea-wall.

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CHAPTER II.

OUR LIBERAL PASSENGERS.

"WHERE are we now, Alick, my boy?" asked my cousin Owen Garningham, as he came on deck after we had anchored off the pier.

"We are at St. Augustine, the oldest city in the United States, founded by the Spaniards in 1565 —"

"Cut it short, if you please, my affectionate cousin," interposed Owen, with an affected yawn. "I haven't been to breakfast yet; and surely you don't expect me to learn history so early in the morning. I simply asked you where we were, and you go back over three hundred years to answer the question."

"I thought you might want to know something about the place," I replied.

"Exactly so. Where are we?"

"We are here."

Owen bit his lip, smiled, and then looked about him at the various objects in sight.

"If you will tell me exactly what you want to know, I will answer your questions; at least, I will tell you all I know," I added.

"Don't do that: it would take too long," he replied, yawning again.

"Thank you."

"I wouldn't listen to all a fool knew before breakfast; and it would take you two years to tell all you know, sweet cousin."

"Not so long as that. We made the land about six this morning, in a fog—"

"You made the land! Well, you didn't have a very bad job of it, for it is nothing but house sand. Of course I know we are somewhere on the coast of Florida, for when we left the Bermudas we were bound to St. Augustine. We have got there, you say; and I thank you for telling me. After breakfast, when I have a cigar, I will, with your leave, read the history of the place."

"You have my permission; and I will furnish the book from which you may read it."

"Thanks. Now, could you, Alick, without straining yourself too much, tell me something about what we may see by looking about us in just this place—never mind the other parts of the State," continued Owen, looking around him.

"I will tell you all I know about it," I replied.

"I wish everybody would tell only that."

"The opening you see on the other side of the bay, and through which we came in from sea, is between Anastasia Island on the south, and the main land on the north. The water to the north and south of us, inside the land, is Matanzas River. The works you see to the north is Fort Marion. The sea-wall extends from that to the point, south of us, a mile: it is built of coquina, a kind of rock quarried on Anastasia Island, formed of sand and shells—"

"Spare me, cousin!"

"From the point to the south of us, you see an opening in the land: that is the mouth of the San Sebastian River. The city of St. Augustine is built on the tongue of land between the two rivers. The buildings near the point are the United States Barracks. The structure extending out into the river from the sea-wall is a wharf or pier, built for the convenience of vessels landing freight or passengers."

"But what does a vessel do that has both freight and passengers?" asked Owen, gravely. "I dare say she has to go to Jacksonville, where they have more than one wharf."

"I stand corrected: a vessel landing passengers *and* freight," I added. "But I can't say, of my own knowledge, that the same vessel lands both here, for I never saw the place before in my life."

"It is well to be sure," said Owen, as the breakfast-bell rang.

Before we left Jacksonville in December, I had taken an additional person on board, who did duty in the cabin as a waiter. Though Peeks, the steward, never complained, I saw that he had too much to do. The distance from the cook's galley to the companion-way of the after cabin made it hard work to serve the table in the latter. The distance to the forward cabin, where the ship's company messed, was hardly less. I found that the officers and crew sometimes had to wait for their meals, and that the discipline of the vessel was thus broken in upon. The steward and the waiter had about all they could do to take care of the five passengers in the after cabin, who were very uncertain in their hours in the morning.

I had decided to have another waiter for the forward cabin, and thus allow Peeks to do the proper work of a chief steward in looking out for the whole of his department. We had been in port

so much during the winter that I found I could well afford the additional expense, for my payments had been less than the estimate. Though we were to cruise on the St. Johns River and other streams during the month, there would be a great deal of boat-work for the deck-hands and firemen, for the latter did not complain if called to other duty than that of the fire-room, and by this time were good sailors.

I went to my breakfast, which had been waiting an hour for me on the galley, for I never left the deck till the anchor was overboard. There was no one to bring my meal, and the mate's watch had taken theirs while I was talking to Owen. It was half an hour before the steward or the waiter could attend to my wants; and the dignity of the commander of the Sylvania did not permit him to carry his own breakfast from the galley, while there were passengers on board. I hoped I should be able to find another waiter at St. Augustine, though I supposed they would all be in demand at the hotels. At last I heard the voices of the passengers on deck. I did not ring the call-bell on the table until I was sure they had finished their morning meal, for all on board made it a point to give up everything for them.

"I haven't had my breakfast yet," I said, as Peeks came down into the cabin. "I have been waiting here half an hour for it."

"I am very sorry, but it happens so sometimes, even when I do my best," replied Peeks, evidently much disturbed by the situation. "It is all I can do, with the waiter, to get what the passengers want when they all come to the table at once. We have to cook everything after they order it, or it would not be fit to eat."

"I don't blame you, and I have no fault to find," I added, soothingly. "I shall give you another waiter as soon as one can be found."

"I think we need another. If the meals could be served at fixed hours, we could get along very well; but the passengers take their breakfast anywhere from eight to eleven."

"I understand it perfectly; but they have a right to do just as they please, and I shall not interfere with their habits," I replied; and the steward went for my breakfast.

It was fifteen minutes before he returned, for Gopher insisted on using me as well as those that sat at the cabin-table when I was late to my meals, and cooked me a fresh dish of ham and eggs. I was blessed with a good appetite, and still liked

country fare best, though Gopher made hotel dishes, with French names, for the after cabin. When I went on deck, I found Owen smoking his cigar in the pilot-house. He was reading one of a pile of Florida guide-books I had procured in Jacksonville, which I had placed by the binnacle for his use.

"I have been waiting for you, Captain Alick," said he.

"And I have been waiting for my breakfast. I shall get another waiter, so that no one will have to wait," I answered.

"Well, I was in no hurry, my dear fellow: if I had been, I should have sent for you. This is the first day of March. Have you the accounts?"

I had them all ready, and went to my desk in my room, just abaft the pilot-house, for them. I gave them to him, but he hardly condescended to look at anything except the total. Throwing away his cigar, he went into my room, where he wrote all his letters, and seated himself at his desk. I followed him, in order to give him a receipt.

"Don't leave, Robsy," said Owen to Washburn, as the mate began to move out of the room.

Washburn resumed his toilet, for he had just donned the new uniform, with which all hands had provided themselves at St. George. Owen handed

me a draft, which I saw was for just three hundred dollars more than the amount of the bill I had rendered. I was astonished that he should make such a mistake.

"This is not correct," I began, as soon as I had looked at the amount of the draft.

"Quite correct; but I see you have got to make a quarrel with me; and I want Robsy to stand by me in this fight," replied Owen.

"Of course I won't take three hundred dollars more than is my due," I protested.

"Cut it short!" exclaimed my cousin. "I told Colonel Shepard I never could get out of it in the world, and he was putting a load on me I could never carry. Where is that bloody contract? Will you do me the favor to burn it?"

"Certainly not," I replied. "I intend to keep my copy, and to abide by its provisions."

"Provisions means grub, don't it?"

"Sometimes it does; but it don't now," I replied, tossing the draft on the desk, at which he was still seated. "I will take only what is due me."

"But I have had a row with Colonel Shepard," protested Owen. "He said he should insist on paying his share of the expenses of this cruise before we left Jacksonville; but I kept him quiet

till yesterday. In the first place, as we have put you to extra expense, Alick, we insisted on adding one hundred dollars a month to the amount I was to pay."

I objected, and explained that I had been obliged to pay only the expense of a waiter, as he paid all the coal and provision bills, but he persisted, and finally appealed to Washburn, who decided in his favor. As I agreed to the decision of the umpire beforehand, I had to submit.

"I made it up with the Colonel by letting him pay half of the bills, though he would pay four-fifths of them at first," chuckled Owen, as though he had won a victory over his fellow-passenger.

I had paid every one of the ship's company his wages when they were due; I had painted the steamer at St. George, while the passengers were travelling on shore; I had taken in a large supply of engine stores; and still had about eleven hundred dollars on hand. I felt that I was getting rich very fast, though a season of idleness might scatter all my wealth.

By this time our passengers had seen all there was to be seen from the hurricane-deck of the steamer. Though the sun had come out, it was rather a cool day to our party, who had spent a

portion of the winter in the tropics. Owen informed me that his friends desired to go on shore. I had hardly sent them off in both boats, before a well-dressed gentleman came on deck, and desired to see the captain.

CHAPTER III.

A NATIVE FLORIDIAN.

THE gentleman who wished to see the captain came off in a small boat, pulled by a man who might have been a mulatto, a Cuban, or a Spaniard. I noticed that he was a fine-looking fellow, lightly but handsomely built. If he had been brown, instead of slightly yellow, I should have taken him for a white man. He had a fine eye, and both his form and his face attracted my attention.

I invited the gentleman in the stern sheets, who wished to see me, to come on board, and then conducted him to my state-room. He was not more than thirty-five, and was dressed rather jantily in a suit of light-colored clothes. He looked and acted like a gentleman, and his speech indicated that he was a person of refinement. I gave him a chair, and took one myself. Washburn had gone ashore in one of the boats, and I had the room to myself. Before he seated himself he handed me a card, on which was engraved "Kirby

Cornwood." There was nothing more to indicate his business.

"Take a seat, Mr. Cornwood," I said, when I had read his name.

"Thank you, Captain Garningham," he replied: and I wondered where he had learned my name, for I had not yet been ashore to report at the custom-house.

"You will excuse me for calling upon you so soon after your arrival; but business is business, and sometimes if it is not attended to in season, it can't be done at all."

"Quite true, sir; and I was going ashore as soon as the boats returned to report at the custom-house," I replied, for the want of something sensible to say. "I do not remember to have met you before, Mr. Cornwood."

"I dare say you do not remember it; but I have met you none the less."

"Indeed! Where was that?" I asked, looking the stranger over again, though I could not recall his form or features.

"In Jacksonville, last December. I was at the funeral of Mr. Carrington, and I saw you several times. I was on the point of offering my services to you then, as I shall now, when I learned that

you were soon to sail for the West Indies," answered Mr. Cornwood, with a very pleasant smile, which might have captured any young man of less experience in the ways of the world than myself.

In spite of his explanation I did not remember him. I had met a great many people at the time of the exciting events attending the arrival of the Sylvania at Jacksonville. I concluded that he was some dealer in provisions, ice, or coal, who wished to furnish the steamer with his wares; and I began to lose all interest in the interview. I had a great many people call upon me who wished to sell something, and I was used to such calls.

"I am willing to admit that it is my fault, but I do not remember you, Mr. Cornwood," I replied, rather coldly, for the chief engineer bought the coal, and the steward the provisions and ice.

"I can well understand why you should not remember me, Captain Garningham, for you met a great many people about the time I saw you, and your mind was occupied with some peculiar matters, such as the sinking of the other steamer."

"Exactly so," I answered, looking out the window, as though I was ready to terminate the interview.

"As I said, I was about to offer my services to

you then; and I shall take the liberty to do so now," he continued, not at all disturbed by anything I said or did.

"I don't think we need the services of any gentleman like yourself."

To my astonishment, he broke into a laugh; and it was some time before he could proceed with his business. I was not aware that I had said anything that was funny: if I had, I should have been highly complimented by the manner in which my joke was received.

"This is not the first time I have been taken for a gentleman," said he, as soon as he was in condition to speak.

"Then you think I made a mistake, do you?" I asked.

"By no means: I have not sunk so low as that yet; and I still believe I am a gentleman, whatever anybody else may think."

He paused, and I waited for him to proceed with his business, instead of asking him what he meant, as he evidently expected me to do.

"Yes, captain: I claim to be a gentleman," he continued, when I showed no inclination to ask any questions. "I belong to the legal profession, though I don't work at it now."

"I am sure we don't need any law on board of this vessel at the present time," I added.

"I do not offer my services in that capacity. I am a native Floridian, a regular corn-cracker," he continued, laughing. "I was born and raised here in St. Augustine. There is not a river, lake, harbor or inlet in all Florida, and hardly a square mile of territory, that I have not explored."

"As a lawyer?" I asked; and his plump statement rather attracted my attention.

"Certainly not. When I was seventeen I began to study for the bar; but my health broke down, and for the next ten years I roamed over the state, now at my own expense, and then as a member of the state surveying party, or the government coast-survey. I am a pilot for any waters in Florida."

"Have you a branch or a warrant?"

"Nothing of the sort: I am only an amateur pilot. I am a hunter and a fisherman, and I know the flora and the fauna of the State. Seven years ago I resumed my studies, and have been admitted to the bar. But my health would not allow me to spend my days in an office or a court-room. Captain Garningham, I offer my services to you as a guide for Florida."

Mr. Kirby Cornwood folded his arms in his

chair, and looked as complacent as though he had just informed me that he was the governor of the State. He evidently believed it was no use to say anything more, and he was silent.

"I am exceedingly obliged to you, Mr. Cornwood, for your offer of service," I replied. "As you are a guide for Florida, could you inform me where the custom-house is?"

"Can I inform you where the custom-house is!" exclaimed the guide for Florida. "How could I have been born and raised in St. Augustine without knowing where the custom-house is?"

"I don't know."

He looked at me as though he thought I was a young man to be pitied. Was there anything relating to Florida that he did not know, was the expression on his face. He could take me to any custom-house in the State by land or water. He could tell me the depth of any lake, stream, or puddle from the Atlantic to the Gulf.

"Having accomplished all that I came on board for, permit me to take my leave, with the hope that you will consider my offer," said Mr. Cornwood, rising from his chair. "I shall be happy to conduct you to the custom-house when you go on shore, or to take your party to all the points of interest in the city."

"Thank you, Mr. Cornwood," I replied.

I had no idea that he intended to leave me, for one does not get rid of such applicants so easily. He bowed gracefully, and much to my astonishment, left my room, walked to the gangway, and went down into his boat. A moment later, I saw the boatman pulling him towards the landing-place. I could not help thinking of his offer after he had gone. It would be exceedingly convenient to have a man on board all the time who could guide us to any object of interest. He was a pilot for any waters of the State.

But I felt that I could not believe more than one-tenth of what he had said. I sat down, and thought over the matter. An extra hundred had just been added to my monthly stipend. I had not thought of having such a person on board before he suggested the idea. I had expected to depend on local guides for information and direction.

If only one-half of Mr. Kirby Cornwood's story was true, and he could perform only one-half of what he promised, he would be a valuable person to our party. He was airy in his manner; but I could not say that this was not the worst part of him. If he had spent ten years of his life with state and national surveys and exploring parties,

he ought to be very familiar with the travelled localities of Florida. I was rather sorry I had not detained him a little longer, and learned something more of his ability to do what he said he could do. But I could find him again; or I had no doubt he would soon find me. If he had not left me with so much dignity, and without pressing his offer of service, I should not probably have given a second thought to him.

Washburn's boat was the first to return, and I went on shore in it. I wanted the mate to see Mr. Cornwood; but I did not mention him, for I wanted my friend to make up his mind in regard to the Floridian without any suggestion from me, and without his knowing that he was doing duty as a judge. I asked Washburn to take a stroll with me. He told his crew he should not want them for a couple of hours, and we walked up the pier.

When we reached the head of it, I saw Mr. Cornwood rushing across the intersecting street as if he meant business, though he was not headed towards me. He did not even seem to see me at first; but as he was about to cross my path, he could not well help doing so. He raised his Panama hat, and bowed politely to me. He evidently did not mean to stop to speak to me; but I

hailed him, and asked where the custom-house was. He described the building, and indicated in what direction I was to go.

"If you will excuse me for a few moments, Captain Garningham, I will join you," said he, hurrying along towards the St. Augustine Hotel, which faces the harbor.

The Floridian certainly did not seem to be very anxious to make an engagement with me; and this fact improved his chances with me. I went to the custom-house, and transacted my business there. As I came out with the mate, I met Mr. Cornwood at the door. I introduced Washburn to him; and the Floridian was as polite to him as to me.

"I am at your service, gentlemen; and, pardon me, captain, without regard to any future engagement," said Mr. Cornwood, with an extra flourish, as he turned to me.

"Thanks. I think you said you were born in Florida," I added.

"Not only in Florida, but here in St. Augustine. If you doubt my statement, I will show you the house in which I first drew the breath of life," he replied, with a deprecatory smile.

Showing the house would prove it; but I thought more of the fact that he seemed to have an inkling

of my trouble in regard to his statements. I told him I was willing to accept his statement without seeing the house.

"My father and mother both died of consumption," he continued. "They came down here from Virginia, and lived twenty years longer than they would in the Old Dominion. My father left me twelve thousand dollars, every cent of which I spent in travelling in this state. But here is your party, captain."

Our passengers were strolling along St. George Street when we met them.

CHAPTER IV.

A TRIP UP THE SAN SEBASTIAN.

STRANGE as it may seem, the Shepards, though they had resided two winters in Jacksonville, had never been to St. Augustine, or even up the St. Johns River. The state of Mrs. Shepard's health had not permitted her to travel for several years, until the preceding summer. They had simply left the ancient city and the up-river glories of "The Land of Flowers" to a more propitious season in the future.

"How do you like the looks of St. Augustine, Miss Edith?" I asked, after we had passed the civilities of the moment, though I did not venture to present Mr. Kirby Cornwood to the party.

"I like it well enough," replied the pretty young lady, with something like a yawn. "But I am getting tired of it so soon; for we have seen so many old Spanish cities in Spain and in the West Indies, that St. Augustine reads like an old story."

The face of the native Floridian wore an ex-

pression of horror as he listened to the remark of Miss Edith. Possibly he might have abated his astonishment at this partially unfavorable opinion of his native city if he had known that she and Owen spent most of their time in thinking of other matters than an old city.

"I am delighted with the place," added Mrs. Shepard. "But we pass various objects of interest without knowing what they are. We have not even a guide-book to help us out."

Mr. Cornwood smiled, but he said nothing. I wondered that he did not offer his services to the lady; but he manifested what seemed to be a very strange modesty for him, standing a little apart from the rest of us, and not even looking at the pretty face of Miss Edith. I took the liberty to introduce the Floridian. He removed his Panama, and bowed low when I mentioned his name; but he did not even speak, much less indulge in any of his pretentious speeches. The walk was resumed, and in the course of the forenoon we had explored the city, from Fort San Marco, on the north, to the point at the south of the city.

Mr. Cornwood proved that he knew all about St. Augustine. I had studied the history of the place and the state very carefully during the leisure

hours of the voyage from the Bermudas, and I was able to confirm the truth of all he said, so far as my knowledge extended, though he went far beyond me. In a little while he was the very centre of the party. It is true that Owen several times requested him to "cut it short," at which the Floridian did not seem to be at all offended; but he soon found that the rest of the company did not wish to have even the historical portions of the guide's discourse abbreviated.

I do not intend to give the history or describe the objects of interest we saw in Florida, except incidentally, for it would take all my space to do these, and I do not pretend to do much more than tell my story. I must say that I was very much interested in the history and descriptions of Mr. Cornwood; and I have no doubt my readers would be equally interested, if I had pages enough at my disposal to include them.

The Floridian did his duty modestly, though he had become the most important person of the party for the time being. There was not a particle of the "brag" and pretension which had caused me to distrust everything he said. As we walked from place to place he kept at a respectful distance from the passengers, and never intruded

himself upon them, though he was always ready to answer any questions. After a three-hours' run we returned to the pier.

I had expected that the party would prefer to go on shore, after their sea-voyage, and take up their residence for our stay at the principal hotel; but they manifested no such intention. As they had taken nothing on shore with them, I had told the steward to have dinner ready for them at the usual hour. The port quarter-boat, which was mine, had come to the landing-place, and the party embarked. I invited Mr. Cornwood to go on board with me, and he accepted the invitation. He took his place in the fore-sheets of the boat, apparently for the purpose of maintaining his respectful distance from the passengers.

In a few minutes we were on the deck of the Sylvania. The passengers retired to the cabin, and Cornwood followed me to my state-room. As soon as we entered the apartment his manner underwent a sudden change. He was as free and familiar as he had been at our interview on board in the morning. As I interpreted his conduct, he considered himself on an entire equality with me, while he intended to treat my passengers with the utmost deference and respect. I did not object to

his view of the relations to be maintained to my passengers and myself; on the contrary, his view was precisely my own.

"What is your price for the service you propose to render, Mr. Cornwood?" I asked, when we were seated.

"Five dollars a day, including Sundays," he replied, without any hesitation. "Of course this salary is besides my board and all expenses."

"That is only three times my own wages," I added with a smile.

"If you will engage me for a year, I will call it fifty dollars a month, and be glad to make this slight reduction of two-thirds," he answered promptly, and with the most easy assurance. "I can make hay only when the sun shines, captain; and I could make more at your wages twice over than I can at my own. The year is not often more than four months long for my business. I attend upon first-class parties only, and I charge eight dollars a day when I am engaged for only a single week. Your party want to go up the St. Johns for at least a month. However, if you object to the price, there is a party at the St. Augustine Hotel who want me for a week to go to Indian River with them. They are willing to

give me ten dollars a day; but I prefer to go with your party at the price I named."

"I am very much obliged to you for this mark of consideration on your part," I replied. "Though you are a perfect stranger to me, I suppose it would not be regarded as an insult for me to ask for any testimonials."

"Not at all. Though I could procure a bushel or two of them, I do not happen to have any with me; but I will refer you to the landlords, and to any resident of St. Augustine."

He seemed to be ready to answer anything I could ask him, and he named a dozen persons of whom I might inquire in regard to him. While the passengers were on shore in the forenoon, I had directed the hands to spread the awnings on the quarter-deck and forecastle. When dinner was over the party seemed to be very well satisfied to remain on board after their walk, for after the sea-voyage the exertion tired them. Owen told me they should not go on shore again, and I decided to inquire into the character and antecedents of Mr. Cornwood.

When we came up from dinner I found Owen smoking his cigar on the forecastle. My passenger asked Cornwood a question, and they were

soon engaged in conversation in regard to Florida. Taking the port boat, with Ben Bowman and Hop Tossford, I left the steamer. I did not even take the trouble to tell the Floridian where I was going. If my inquiries were satisfactorily answered, I intended to engage him for the time we remained in Florida. He had mentioned the name of a family that boarded on the west side of the city, near the San Sebastian River, and I decided to make the first inquiries there.

I steered the boat around the point into the river, and soon passed the more thickly settled portion of the town. Orange groves lined the shore, and the fragrant jasmine scented the air. If I had not been all winter in the tropics, I should have gone into ecstasies over the scene that was spread out before me. But orange groves were nothing new to me now, and I was familiar with banana and palm trees.

I could not be insensible to the beauties of the region, and in that mild atmosphere I could not help enjoying it. On the shore were the dwellings of wealthy men who spent their winters in this delightful locality. Soon we came to a house, on the very bank of the river, with a kind of pier built out into the river, at which several sail

and row boats were moored. This was the large boarding-house to which I had been directed by the Floridian.

I identified it from his description some time before we reached it. As the boat approached the house, and I ran in towards the pier, I noticed there was a great commotion in the vicinity. The inmates were rushing out of the house, negroes were running here and there, apparently without any settled purpose, and not a few women were screaming.

"I wonder what the matter is at that house," I said to the oarsmen, who were back to the scene, and could see nothing of it.

"Matter enough, I should say," replied Ben Bowman, who pulled the bow-oar, as he looked behind him. "The house is on fire!"

The immense live-oaks that half concealed the house from my view had prevented me from seeing the volume of smoke and flame that was rising from one corner of the mansion. The fire had already made considerable progress.

"Give way, lively, my men!" I called to the rowers. "We shall be needed there."

Ben and Hop pulled a strong stroke, and they exerted themselves until the oars bent before their

vigorous muscles. I headed the boat for some steps I saw on the pier, and in a few moments more we were within hailing distance of the wharf.

"Way enough!" I called to the oarsmen. They ceased rowing, and brought their oars to a perpendicular, man-of-war fashion, as required by our boat-drill.

Ben Bowman went to the bow, fended off, and then jumped ashore with the painter in his hand. Hop Tossford and I followed him in good order, as all were instructed to move when in the boats; and in a moment we were on the pier. My men broke into a run for the scene of the fire; but I moved more slowly, and studied the situation as I walked up the wharf.

The inmates of the house and the neighbors who had gathered appeared to be in utter confusion, and incapable of doing anything, if there was anything that could be done. It seemed to me that the fire had progressed too far to be checked, and that the entire destruction of the house was inevitable. But certainly some portion of the property in the building could be saved, and the people seemed to have no power even to attend to this duty. Our boat's crew could set a good example in this way, if in no other; and I hurried my steps as soon as I could decide what to do.

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As soon as I reached the garden in the rear of the house, I found there was something more important to be done than saving furniture. A gentleman whom I judged to be about forty years of age was on the point of rushing into the burning house when he was held back by others. They said the stairs were already in flames, and the second story could be reached only from the outside.

"My daughter is asleep in the corner-room!" gasped the gentleman, pointing to the window of the chamber.

The next instant Hop Tossford was running up the posts of the veranda.

CHAPTER V.

SAVED FROM THE BURNING HOUSE.

BY this time the flames, which had been confined to half a dozen windows, were breaking out through the roof of the house. Ben Bowman and I followed Hop Tossford to the roof of the veranda, which surrounded the building, though, as we had waited to hear more of the situation, we were considerably behind him. We all attempted the ascent by different posts. That which Ben took slipped out, and tumbled over; and the fire was so hot where I was that I had some difficulty in getting a foothold on the roof.

I had hardly accomplished my purpose when I heard a scream. The next instant I saw Hop leap from the window near the corner with a lady in his arms. She was still screaming; but it appeared that she had been alarmed only at finding herself in the arms of a stranger. She had not been aroused from her sleep till Hop lifted her from the bed.

The deck-hand set her on her feet as soon as he reached the roof of the veranda. She looked about her, and she could not help seeing and hearing the devouring flames. She comprehended the situation, and ceased to scream. By this time a ladder was raised to the roof of the veranda, and as soon as Hop saw the top of it, he assisted the lady to descend, which she accomplished in safety. I saw her in the arms of her father, and both of them were weeping.

As soon as I saw that the young lady was safe, I led the way into the rooms on the side of the house which was not yet on fire, though the flames were now breaking into them, and proceeded to throw out the baggage and other articles we found. Hop took the chamber from which he had just saved the occupant, and removed a trunk and all the drawers of a bureau. These articles were carried down the ladder by the guests and others. We worked until we were driven from the veranda by the flames.

When I reached the ground, I found the lady who had been saved out on the pier with her father, with their trunks which had been removed there by the latter. She had transferred from the drawers of the bureau brought out by Hop, all her

clothing. She had quite recovered from her fright. She was not more than sixteen, and with the exception of Edith Shepard, I never saw a prettier girl.

"We are under very great obligations to you, gentlemen," said the father of the fair young lady. "I am sure my daughter would have perished without the assistance of one of your number."

"This is the young man that brought your daughter out of the house," I replied, pointing to Hop.

"I thank you with all my heart and soul for what you have done," said the stranger, taking Hop's hand. "It seems that my daughter was asleep when you entered her chamber, and she would surely have been burned to death without your bold effort."

"And I thank you with all my heart and soul!" exclaimed the young lady, blushing as she took the hand of her gallant deliverer. "I was fast asleep when you lifted me from the bed, and I only screamed because I thought some man was carrying me off. At first, I thought it was a dream."

"I was very clumsy about it; and I beg your pardon for frightening you so. I might have

spoken before I took you from the bed. But I have had no experience in such business," pleaded Hop. "I shall know better how to do it next time."

"You did it exceedingly well," said the lady, with emphasis.

"It matters little how it was done, so it was done," said the father.

"That is just what I think, papa. I can't express anything at all that I feel towards this gentleman for the great service he has done me. I wish I could say just what is in my heart!" exclaimed the fair young lady.

"I am very glad you can not," added Hop, who seemed to be embarrassed by the gratitude of the young lady and her father.

"We shall never forget the service of this young gentleman. Everybody else was paralyzed, and unable to do anything," continued the stranger. "I had been to walk; and on my return I saw the smoke long before I reached the house. I did not think of my daughter being in her room at first, but it occurred to me that she has been in the habit of taking a nap after dinner lately. As I did not see her among the other people of the house, I was paralyzed by the thought that she might be asleep."

SAVED FROM THE BURNING HOUSE.

"I owe my life to your coming; and I never shall forget this service, any more than my father," added the young lady, as she bestowed a grateful look upon Hop.

"We shall see more of you, gentlemen; and I hope I shall be able to prove to you that I properly value the service you have rendered. But, Margie, we are turned out of house and home by the fire."

"But we have saved all our luggage, thanks to these gentlemen! We are not so badly off as some of the people in the house, who must have lost everything."

"There are some others here who will have occasion to be thankful for your arrival; for I don't think anything would have been saved if you had not taken the lead. But, Margie, we haven't even a carriage to convey us to a hotel."

"I think I can manage that for you, sir," I interposed. "We can take you and your trunks into our boat, and convey you to the other side of the town."

"Thanks; you are very kind. But we are not willing to take up any more of your time," protested the stranger. "Besides, I don't know where to go, unless we take the next train for Jackson-

ville; for yesterday, and when we arrived a week ago, the hotels and boarding-houses were all full to overflowing. I only got in where I was by the landlord and his daughter giving us their rooms, while they went to a cottage of a friend. Perhaps we had better leave the place at once, for I am sure we can't find lodgings. I looked the place all over for accommodations."

"But we are too late to leave the place to-night, papa," replied Miss Margie, and both she and her father seemed to be very anxious about the situation.

"We shall find some kind of accommodations at the hotels, though it be nothing better than the servants' rooms. They won't let us sleep in the streets," added the father, more cheerfully.

"I think I can take care of you for a few days," I interposed; "at any rate, until you find better quarters."

"Pardon me, sir; but you look like sailors; and you all went up the posts under the veranda as though you were sailors," added the gentleman.

"We are sailors, and we belong to a steam-yacht lying at anchor on the other side of the city," I replied. "We will take you and your daughter around to her, with your baggage; and then you

can make such arrangements for the future as you desire."

"We thank you; you are very kind, and we accept your offer," said the gentleman. "The place is so crowded with visitors that it is very difficult to get anything done for you; and we might have to stay here a long time before we could get a carriage to convey us and our luggage to another place. Besides, this fire will turn forty or fifty people out of their house, and there will be an increased demand for rooms."

"I can take care of you for a few days, at any rate," I replied. "Put those trunks into the fore sheets of the boat, Ben."

The trunks and the other baggage were stowed in the forward part of the boat, and I assisted the fair stranger and her father to the cushioned seats in the stern sheets. When we were all in, the boat was pretty well loaded down. Ben shoved her well off into the stream, and I took the tiller-lines, seated between my two passengers.

"Up oars! Let fall! Give way!" I continued, giving the usual orders. Ben and Hop bent to their oars, while all of us took a parting view of the scene of the fire. The house was burned to the ground; and it seemed to me that nearly the

whole population of the city was gathered in the vicinity. A fire was not a common thing, and people went to see it as a curiosity.

The month of March is one of the most trying in the whole year in the North, and vast numbers of people had come down to Florida to escape its rigors. All the watering-places in the State were crowded with visitors, and in St. Augustine, the most popular resort, there was not a vacant room to be had. While my new passengers were gazing at the remains of the fire and the crowd that surrounded them, I began to think how I should dispose of my guests on board of the Sylvania. I was not quite willing to intrude upon Owen's party by putting them in the after cabin; but I could easily make two rooms of the captain's large apartment, while Washburn and I found quarters in the forward cabin.

The vigorous strokes of Ben and Hop soon brought us to the steamer. The passengers were still seated under the awning of the quarter-deck; and Owen had finished his cigar and joined Miss Edith, whose shadow he was when his cigar did not need attention. They all rose from their seats when they saw that I had company, for of course their curiosity was excited. We pulled around

the stern, and came up to the port gangway, where the steps were rigged out.

Hop Tossford handed Miss Margie up the steps to the deck, while I assisted the gentleman, whose name I did not yet know, though I had read "P. T." on the ends of the trunks. I conducted the new passengers to the captain's room. I wanted Washburn, in order to have him remove his clothes and other articles into the forward cabin. When I looked for him, he was with the party on the quarter-deck. I went to him. In a few words I explained the situation to him. He was very willing to change his quarters, and declared that he would sleep on the fore-yard, if necessary.

"I beg your pardon, Captain Alick, but what had you in the boat?" asked Owen, as Washburn went forward.

"I had a gentleman and his daughter, with their luggage, as we say in England," I replied.

"I beg your pardon again; but who are the gentleman and his daughter?"

"I haven't the least idea. They were in a house over the other side of the city, and some way up, which has just been burned to the ground. Very likely that young lady would have been burned to death if Hop had not brought her out of her room,

where she was asleep. Every hotel and boarding-house in the place is full, and they had no place to go: so I brought them on board till they can find a hotel."

"Very good of you; but what were you just saying to Robsy?" demanded Owen.

"I told him to move his traps out of our room; and I shall do the same with mine," I replied.

"You will do nothing of the sort," protested my cousin.

"What's the reason I won't?"

"Because the lady shall have my state room; and her father and I will just take berths in the cabin."

Before I could say anything more, Owen rushed down into the cabin, and I followed him.

CHAPTER VI.

MOONLIGHT AND MUSIC ON BOARD.

OWEN called the steward and the waiter, and directed them to move all his luggage from the state-room. He assisted himself in the work, and seemed to be very much in earnest.

"I don't ask you to do this, Owen; and I didn't expect you to do it," I protested.

"Did you expect me to be a swine?" demanded he indignantly.

"No, certainly not; but I have no right to do anything to deprive you of the comfort you pay for," I replied.

"But who are these people, Alick?"

"They haven't even given me their names; I know nothing whatever in regard to them. Rather than have them stay out in the street, I was ready to give up my room."

"It's all right, Alick. Give the lady my state-room, and I will take a berth. The curtains draw out in such a way as to make a little room in front

of each bunk, and I shall be just as well off as in my room."

"I don't like to have you do this. Won't you take my room? I will have it fitted up for you in as good style as this cabin; and it is twice as large as this room."

"No, I thank you, Alick. I shall be very comfortable in one of these berths. Let me hear no more objections. Now bring the gentleman and his daughter down into the cabin, and assure them they are as welcome as they would be in their own house."

It was useless to say anything more to Owen; for when he insisted on having his own way, he had it. I went forward and invited the strangers below. Ben brought their trunks and other baggage after them, and they were soon installed in their new quarters.

"What a lovely little room!" exclaimed Miss Margie, as I showed the state-room. "It is ever so much nicer than the one I had in the steamer I came across the ocean in!"

"I am sorry I have not another state-room for you, sir," I said to her father, as I came out of the daughter's room. "But we will do the best we can for you."

I pulled out the slide to which the curtains were attached, in front of one of the berths.

"Nothing could be better than that," replied the gentleman, with enthusiasm. "We are better lodged than we were in that boarding-house. The only fear is that we are intruding."

"Not at all, sir. The gentleman that charters the yacht wished me to say to you that you are as welcome as you could be in your own house."

"I will soon pay my respects to him. I dare say he is the owner of this delightful little craft."

"No, sir; he only charters her."

"And who is the owner of her?"

"I am the owner, sir."

"Bless me! You are quite a young man to be the owner of such a fine little vessel," said the new passenger. "Will you favor me with your name?"

"Alexander Garningham," I replied, not supposing my name could be of any particular consequence to him.

"Garningham! I half suspected it!" ejaculated the gentleman. "I have a letter for you."

"A letter for me, sir!" I exclaimed, wondering who could have given him such a missive."

"It is very strange that I should stumble on you in this manner, when I have been looking

for you all over the country," continued the gentleman, fumbling his pockets for the letter.

I almost came to the conclusion that he was a "fraud," trying to play some trick upon me, in the interest of Captain Boomsby, or some other designing person, when he produced the letter. He handed it to me. I instantly recognized the peculiar handwriting of my father. It thrilled me to my very soul. I glanced at the superscription. It was my name in the familiar writing. Under it was, "By the hand of the Hon. Pardon Tiffany."

"Mr. Tiffany, I am very happy to meet you," I said, when I had read what was on the outside of the letter.

"Captain Alick Garningham, I am more than happy to see you," he replied, grasping my hand. "I know all about you from your father."

I excused myself, and opened the letter; but it was only an introduction, written just before my father started for India. He spoke of Mr. Tiffany as his best and truest friend in England, who was to travel a year or more in America.

"How long have you been in this country, Mr. Tiffany?" I asked, thinking it very strange, from the date of the letter, that I had not seen him before.

"Less than four months. I was ill after your father started for India, and was unable to leave home till six months later than I had intended," he replied. "I suppose you hear from your father occasionally?"

"I have not heard from him since he left for India," I replied.

I saw that he knew nothing of the events which had occurred since I left Lake St. Clair. It took me an hour to tell the story in full. He seemed to be greatly astonished when I told him that the person who chartered the steam-yacht was my cousin, Owen Garningham. He knew most of the family, though he had never met Owen, who had been away at school, or on his travels on the Continent, when he visited my father.

Miss Margie had come out of her state-room some time before I finished my story; but she busied herself with a book till we had concluded our conference. I asked them both to go on deck with me, and I introduced them to my passengers. Owen did not appear to know Mr. Tiffany or to know of him when his name was mentioned. I thought it was best not to say anything at present. Both of the guests were treated with the utmost consideration and kindness by Owen and

the Shepards. The story of the fire was rehearsed, and Miss Margie was the heroine of the hour.

The afternoon was wearing away, and I had yet made no inquiries in regard to Cornwood. I knew not where to find the person to whom he had referred me at the house which had been burned. I ordered the boat again, and went on shore. I found a party at one of the hotels who had employed the Floridian, and they spoke in the highest terms of him. The natives of St. Augustine usually smiled when I asked about Cornwood; but no one said anything against him that I did not know — that he was "airy" and given to "brag." It was about dark when I returned, but the Floridian was still on board.

"I am sorry to hear that Colonel Estwell's house has been burned," said Cornwood, as I came on deck. "It was doing a good business, and the fire will be a heavy blow to the Colonel. I suppose you heard nothing bad about me."

"Nothing very bad. I engage you at the terms you named for the time the steam-yacht remains in Florida," I added. "You will have a berth in the forward cabin, and mess with the officers."

"You will have no occasion to regret what you have done," said the Floridian, confidently.

"I hope not. Now, can you find a waiter for me?" I continued, explaining the need of additional help in the steward's department.

"A waiter! Fifty more than there are in the city could find places in one hour," said he, laughing at the apparent absurdity of the question. "However, as you have applied to me, I have no doubt I can find one for you."

"Do you think you can?" I asked, rather anxiously. "I have added two more persons to the company to be cared for at the cabin-table, and we shall get nothing to eat in the forward cabin if we don't have more help."

"You shall have a waiter if I have to take him out of the dining-room of the St. Augustine Hotel," replied Mr. Cornwood, with as much assurance as though all the waiters in the city were under his charge.

I sent him ashore in the starboard boat; and Buck and Landy, the crew, were glad to spend an hour in the city. In less than that time the Floridian returned, and with him was the waiter. When the new man came into my room to see me, I was not a little surprised to find he was the same "yellow man" I had seen in the boat that brought off the guide the first time he boarded the Sylvania.

He was a remarkably good-looking fellow, and I soon ascertained that he was as intelligent as he was handsome. His name was Griffin Leeds. He was neither a Spaniard nor an Italian, but an octoroon.

Both the guide and the waiter brought off their baggage in the boat. Among the effects of Griffin Leeds I noticed a violin-case. Tom Sands, the cabin-waiter, whom I had obtained at Jacksonville, played the banjo in the most artistic manner. Neither of the waiters were any common sort of colored men; and I soon found that race distinctions were vastly more insisted on by these men than by any white man on board, unless it was the Floridian.

We had a full table in the forward cabin at supper that night, and Griffin Leeds showed that he thoroughly understood his business, and that he was active and zealous besides. I was very well pleased with him, and so were all the other officers of the steamer.

It was a bright moonlight evening, and the air was soft and balmy. I sat with the passengers under the awning on the quarter-deck. By this time Edith and Margie had got along far enough to sit with their arms around each other's waists.

One would think they had known each other for years, they were so affectionate. We were talking about the voyage down from the Great Lakes, when the attention of the whole party was attracted by the music of a violin on the hurricane-deck. The instrument was well played. Presently the volume of the music was increased by the addition of a banjo.

"That's good," said Owen. "I think music, even if it isn't first-class, is delightful on the water."

"It is perfectly charming!" exclaimed Edith.

"It seems almost like fairy-land!" added Margie.

I saw that all hands were in the gangway; then a violoncello, of whose existence on board I was not aware, was passed up to the hurricane-deck. Landy Perkins played on this instrument, which had been purchased at St. George. I knew that Ben Bowman had formerly played in the Montomercy Brass Band, and I saw him mount the ladder with his cornet. In a few minutes our band was playing "There's music in the air," though the first attempts were evidently not entirely satisfactory to the musicians. After an hour's practice together the music improved.

We sat on deck till a late hour. The next day, under the guidance of Mr. Cornwood, the party visited the coquina quarries on Anastasia Island, and wandered over the city again. In the evening the band played again, reinforced by the Floridian, who played the cornet. He told me confidentially that he was not in the habit of playing with "niggers," but he was willing to do anything to contribute to the pleasure of the party. I thought it was very condescending in him.

After three days at St. Augustine we sailed for Jacksonville.

CHAPTER VII.

THE ENEMY IN A NEW BUSINESS.

WE had three ladies on board; but Tom Sands was the bedroom steward as well as waiter, and I thought this was not just the thing. I came to the conclusion, before we left St. Augustine, that we ought to have a stewardess to wait upon the ladies. I spoke to Mr. Cornwood, and in a few hours more we had Chloe, the wife of Griffin Leeds, duly installed in that position.

She had no children, and did not appear to be more than twenty years old. She was very neat and lively, and the ladies were much pleased with her. She had had experience on a Charleston and a St. Johns steamer. The forecastle of the Sylvania had not been used on the cruise except as a storeroom, and I had this prepared for the use of Leeds and his wife. Peeks and Sands slept in the cabin; and if the stewardess was wanted in the night, she could be called.

It was only a six or seven hours' run to Jack-

sonville, especially as we had a strong southwesterly breeze, and carried all sail in addition to our steam. We started at an early hour in the morning, so as to have the tide right to cross the bar at the mouth of the river.

"You needn't put that flag in the fore-rigging," said Mr. Cornwood, when he discovered the signal for a pilot flying, as we approached the bar.

"Why not?" I asked, forgetting some of the wonderful things he had told me he could do.

"I am a pilot for any waters of Florida, and I can take the steamer across the bar as well as any man you will pay for this service," he added, apparently hurt by the appearance of the ensign on the foremast.

"But you have neither branch nor warrant; and if anything should happen to the Sylvania while she has not a regular pilot on board, my passengers would never forgive me."

"But I know that bar as well as I knew the rooms in my father's house," protested the Floridian.

"But you are not an authorized pilot," I insisted.

I could not see why he was so strenuous about the matter, unless it was because he thought I dis-

trusted his ability. The steamer was not insured, so that nothing depended upon that matter; but I could not trust a pilot whose ability had not been proved. Cornwood was quite sulky about the matter for some time, and declared that, if he was to be of no use on board he did not care to remain. He had some self-respect, and he could not take his salary if he did not earn it.

When the pilot came on board it proved to be the same one who had taken us over in December. He had a great deal to say about the exciting events of that day; and as he stood at the wheel he asked many questions about the steamer and the man who had attempted to wreck her.

"I took an ice schooner up to Jacksonville about three weeks ago, and I stopped a day in the city," said the pilot. "You see, I live on Fort George Island, and when I go up to the city I always come down again as soon as I can; but this time I stopped over for a day, for I had a chance to bring a vessel down. I went into a saloon on Bay Street, and who should I see behind the bar but the man that ran the other steam-yacht into this one, or tried to do so, and got the boot on t'other leg."

"What, Captain Boomsby?" I asked, astonished at the information.

"Yes, that's the name. I had forgotten what it was; and he hadn't got his sign out then."

"Do you mean to say that he is in business in Jacksonville?" I asked.

"He keeps a saloon there."

"What sort of a saloon?"

"Why, a bar-room," replied the pilot, laughing. "He told me he had been up north since I saw him, and had brought his family down. He lives overhead the saloon; and he seemed to be doing a lively business."

"I am afraid he will be his own best customer," I added.

"I reckon he is, for he was getting rather full when I saw him."

"He talked about coming to Florida when I saw him in Michigan; but he said he was going into the business of raising early vegetables and oranges."

"He has got a place up the river, and means to raise truck for the market besides. He must have some money."

"I think he has considerable property. He did not find farming in Michigan as profitable as he expected. He is one of those men who want to coin money all at once."

Shortly after noon we came to anchor off the city. The pilot leaped into his canoe, and boarded a steamer going down the river. Colonel Shepard was in a hurry to go on shore, and I landed him at once. The steward went off to the market for ice and fresh provisions in the other boat. I did not expect all my passengers to remain on board while we were at Jacksonville. The Colonel had a house which had been badly damaged by fire while we were here in December, and I had no doubt he would occupy it, with his family, while we remained here.

He was not absent more than an hour, for his house was on St. James Park, a short distance from the shore. Everything about it had been put in complete repair, and it was ready for occupancy. In the afternoon we landed the family, and the Hon. Mr. Tiffany and his daughter were invited to go with them. The Sylvania seemed to be deserted when they were gone; but in a few days we were to begin the trip up the river, and in the meantime take the party on such excursions as they desired to make. Of course Owen went with the Shepards.

Chloe had made herself so agreeable to the ladies that they desired her to accompany them on shore.

The steamer was in first-rate condition, and there was nothing for anybody to do but eat and sleep. Mr. Kirby Cornwood was still sulky because he had not been permitted to pilot the vessel up from the ocean; but I was not disposed to comfort him. About four o'clock, it was so quiet on board, I thought I would go on shore for a while. Washburn was asleep in our room, and I did not disturb him, for we had all been up till after midnight the night before, listening to the music, and enjoying the moonlight.

I landed at the boat wharf opposite the Grand National Hotel, on Bay Street. This is the principal street of the city, and both sides of it are lined with stores, warehouses, and the principal public buildings. It extends parallel with the river. At one end of it is the railroad station and the Grand National; near the other end are the Carlton Hotel and the Yacht Club house. Nearly all the business of the city is done on this street.

When the stranger leaves Bay Street he seems to enter another country in passing the distance of a single square. About all the other streets are bordered with live-oaks or water-oaks, and every house has a flower-garden and an orange grove, on a small scale. The balconies and veran-

das are loaded with vines, which are in full flower in March. The air is scented with the fragrance of the jasmine. The sidewalks are of wood, and the roads are the original soil, which looks like the blue house-sand of the North.

St. James Park is two squares from Bay Street. All of one side of it is occupied by the St. James Hotel. In the centre of the park is a small kiosk, from which one may take in the surroundings. Like all the rest of Florida, even the fertile orange groves, the soil looks like blue sand. There are plenty of semi-tropical plants, and the scene is as unlike anything in the North as possible. In every lot there are orange-trees, with oranges on them; but they are not the eatable fruit. They are bitter or sour oranges, which remain on the trees all winter.

The orange-trees blossom in March; and then the air is densely loaded with their perfume. The leaves remain green all winter; but in the early spring they begin to put forth new shoots and leaves. The old leaves are dark green, and the new ones light. On the same tree may be seen the old and the new leaves, the ripe fruit, and the richly-scented blossoms. Coming from the frozen North in March, the traveller seems to be hurled

into "eternal summer," more like fairy-land than anything else, as the wheels whirl him into Jacksonville.

I had seen the place in December, coming from the summer of a more northern latitude. I had spent the winter in more tropical regions, and the flowers and the oranges were nothing new to me. When I landed I was thinking of the post-office, which was my first objective point. We had been moving about so much that I had not received a single letter since I left Jacksonville in December. The post-office is on Bay Street, nearer the northern than the southern end of the street. I walked in that direction; but I had not gone ten rods before I saw Captain Boomsby standing at the door of one of the numerous saloons on that street.

I halted to look at him. His face was very red, and he had grown quite stout since he sailed the Great West, in which I had had the roughest experience of my lifetime with him. He wore no coat, for his fat and the fires of the whiskey he drank kept him in a fever-heat all the time. I kept back behind a pile of goods on the sidewalk while I surveyed him, and I hoped he would not see me. He seemed to be waiting for customers; and though I desired him to have none, I wished him

to retire within his shop, and allow me to pass without being seen.

I was dressed in the full uniform of the steam-yacht, with a white canvas cap. He had seen me in this rig enough to know it, and my chances of passing him without being seen were very small. But I was not afraid of him, and I was rather ashamed of the idea of dodging him. Taking the outside of the sidewalk, and looking intently at the other side of the street, where the retail dry-goods and curiosity shops were located, I attempted to get by the saloon without being seen by its proprietor.

"Why, Sandy, how are you?" demanded Captain Boomsby, rushing out to me and seizing me by the hand.

In spite of my hanging back, he dragged me to the door of the saloon.

"How do you do, Captain Boomsby?" I replied coldly.

"Come in and take sunthin', Sandy," he persisted, dragging me into the saloon in spite of my resistance. "You are about man-grown now, and I cal'late you can take a drop of whiskey, on a pinch."

"No, I thank you; I never take any," I re-

plied, disgusted with his manner and his invitation.

"You hain't been to sea all this time without learnin' to take your grog?" he continued, with a coarse laugh.

"I never drank a drop in my life, and I don't mean to do so," I answered.

"You'll learn in good time. Set down, Sandy, and tell me where you've been."

I told him in as few words as possible where I had been, and answered all his questions about my passengers. Then he told me he lived over the saloon, and insisted that I should go up and see the "old woman." I was a little curious to see Mrs. Boomsby, and I followed him up-stairs.

CHAPTER VIII.

A DISAGREEABLE ROOM-MATE.

I HAD not seen Mrs. Boomsby for several years; and though I had no reason to expect anything but abuse from her, my curiosity induced me to see her. If anything, she was more of a tyrant than her brutal husband, and I had no occasion to thank her for anything she had done for me. She was the more plucky of the pair, and it had surprised me, years before, to learn that she "ruled the roost." At that time the captain was actually afraid of her.

"You have got pretty well up in the world, Captain Boomsby," I said when we had gone up two flights of stairs and were about to ascend a third.

"Well, you see, I let all these lower rooms; and the folks is jest as well off up three pair of stairs as up one," he replied, almost out of breath, for the stairs told more heavily on him than on me. Besides, I like to have the old woman as far as I

can from the business; she don't interfere so much then."

The old reprobate chuckled then as though he had said something smart; but I would have given a quarter to have had his wife overhear the remark, for the fun of the scene that would have ensued.

"Parker Boomsby! where on earth air you goin'?" shouted a shrill, but very familiar voice on the floor below us.

"All right," replied the captain, evidently much disturbed by the call. "I thought she was up here; but she always turns up just where you don't want her. But come up, Sandy; I want to show you a room I've fixed up."

"No, I thank you; as Mrs. Boomsby is not up here, I think I will go down," I replied, beginning to retrace my steps.

"What are you doin' with strangers up gerret, Parker Boomsby?" demanded the lady on the floor below.

"I've got sunthin' up here that belongs to you, Sandy; I want to give it to you," pleaded the captain. "I fetched you up here to give it to you afore I took you in to see the old woman."

I concluded that he had some reason for taking me to the attic of the house, and I was curious to

know what it was. It is true he had led me to believe that his wife was in this part of the house; but that might have been one of his huge jokes. I followed him up the last flight of stairs. I was then on the fourth floor of the house. There were two large and two small chambers in this attic, none of which appeared to be furnished.

"It is in this room," said Captain Boomsby, leading me into the rear hall chamber. "It's a little grain dark in here."

I saw that the window that looked out on the river-side of the house had been boarded up. He led the way into the room, and I followed him.

"I've got a picter of you when you wasn't more'n four year old. It was taken when you was in the poor-house, by a feller that come along taking picters, to show what he could do. It hangs on the wall over here," continued the captain, passing between me and the door. "You can look at it all the rest of the day, if you like."

Suddenly he dodged out of the door, and I heard the bolt spring as he locked the door behind him. I had not expected that he would resort to any trick to get possession of me; and I had been as unsuspicious as though I were on board of the Sylvania. In fact, I was amazed at the hardihood

of the man in attempting to make a prisoner of me in this manner. For some reason or other, I was not at all alarmed at my situation. I did not consider the door absolutely invulnerable; and I was confident that I had strength enough to remove the boards that had been nailed up before the window.

When I had been in the room a few minutes, there was light enough which came through the cracks in the boards before the window to enable me to see where I was. There was not an article of furniture of any kind in the apartment. The boards appeared to be securely fastened, not with nails, as I had supposed, but with screws. The boards were of hard pine, and about as strong as oak. My prison was stronger than it seemed at first.

I came to the conclusion before I had been in the room ten minutes, that this apartment had been prepared for my reception. Captain Boomsby knew that the Sylvania was to return to Jacksonville, as others did. It was plain that he had not yet given up the idea of possessing the steamer. He claimed to be my guardian, and to have the legal right to possess whatever belonged to me. Carrington had told him my father was dead, and he believed he could carry his point. I had cer-

tainly been bound out to him until I was of age; but he had surrendered all his claims to me in writing to my father, though this document had been destroyed in the fire. .

The fact that I had a father, rendered his claim upon me of no value. I was satisfied that no lawyer would undertake the case he proposed to make out against me. I learned that he had tried in Charleston to employ a legal gentleman to assist him in his work of getting possession of the steamer; but no one could furnish any warrant of law for the proceeding. I was not disposed to bother my head with the legal aspect of the case, for my ancient enemy certainly had no legal right to kidnap me, and make me a prisoner in his own house. I was a prisoner; and when I came to a realizing sense of the fact, I was ready for business.

"What on airth are you doin' up here, Parker Boomsby?" snarled the wife of that worthy; and as I stood at the door of my prison, I could hear her pant from the violence of her exertions in ascending the stairs, for, like her liege lord, she had greatly increased her avoirdupois since I lived with the family at Glossenbury. Possibly she drank too much whiskey, like the companion of her joys and sorrows, though I had no information on this

point. I only knew that she used to take a little when she was too hot or too cold, when she was wet or when she was dry.

"Hush, Nancy! Don't cut up now!" pleaded the master of the house, as perhaps he supposed he was.

"Don't talk to me, Parker Boomsby! What are you a-doin' up here? What sort of a con-spy-racy be you gittin' up at this blessed moment? Don't talk to me about cuttin' up! It is you that is allus cuttin' up, and never tellin' your peaceful, sufferin' wife what you are doin'," replied Mrs. Boomsby; and I was confident she had been drinking to some extent, from her maudlin tones.

"Hush, Nancy! I've got Sandy Duddleton, with all his fine sodjer's clothes on, in that room," said the captain, in a tone of triumph. "I shall make him give up that steam-yachet; and I shall run her as a reg'lar line up to Green Cove Springs, stoppin' at our orange farm both ways," replied Captain Boomsby, using his best efforts to appease the anger of his spouse.

"Hev you got him in there?" demanded the lady, evidently entirely mollified by the announcement of her husband. "I want to see him. I hain't sot eyes on him sence I see him in Michigan."

"It won't do to open the door: he'll git away if I do. Wait till he gits tamed down a little, and then you shall see him. Good gracious! I forgot all about the bar! Jest as like as not some nigger will come in and help hisself to the best liquor behind the counter. Run down, Nancy, and tell Nicholas to tend to the bar," said the captain.

"Run down yourself, you old fool!" replied the amiable lady. "Do you think I come clear up here for nothin'? I want to see Sandy Duddleton in his sodjer's clothes."

"It won't do to open that door: he will git out if you do. But I must go down and look out for the bar. I shouldn't wonder if I had lost ten cents by this time," replied Captain Boomsby; and I heard his heavy step on the stairs as he went down.

A moment later I heard a hand applied to the handle of the door, and I had no doubt it was Mrs. Boomsby trying to open it in order to obtain a view of "Sandy Duddleton," which was the name by which I was known when an inmate of the poorhouse. But the door was locked, and the key was in the pocket of the proprietor of the saloon. The lady seemed to be angry because she could not get into the room where I was; and I must add that I was also sorry she could not, for if she could get in, I could get out.

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She tried the door several times, but she could not get in. She said nothing to me; and as I expected no assistance from her, I said nothing. Presently I heard her step on the stairs, hardly less heavy than that of her husband. I concluded that it must be five o'clock by this time; and looking at my watch, I found it was half an hour later. I wanted to get out before dark; and so far, I had not matured any plan to accomplish this purpose. I went to the window, and examined the boards which had been screwed up before it.

I had a large jack-knife in my pocket, which I had carried for several years. It had a kind of scimitar-shaped blade I had used when at work on rigging. But I had little hope of being able to remove the screws from the hard pine, which was as hard to work as oak. I struck a match I had in my pocket, and by the light of it made a careful examination of the screw-heads in the boards. I saw that holes had been bored in the wood to admit the screws: indeed, it would have been impossible to get them through without boring. Of course this would make it easier to remove the screws.

But what was the use of taking down the boards in front of the window? I could not jump down

from the attic floor of the building. Yet I could go to the next window, come into the house again, and then go down-stairs, the same as anybody would. I noticed that the lowest board was not more than two inches wide: it had been cut to fit what remained uncovered of the window. I applied my knife to the screws in this narrow strip. Though they were hard to move, I succeeded in getting them out. But the labor of taking down the rest of the boards, or enough of them to enable me to pass out, was so great that I was discouraged in the attempt to accomplish it. The end of the knife-blade did not fit the slit of the screw.

The removal of the narrow board admitted light enough to enable me to see all about the room. Next to the door which opened into the hall was another, which I concluded led into a closet. There was no picture of me when I was a small child; and I wondered if Captain Boomsby had invented that fable on the spot. I was not willing to believe it. It would have required too great an exercise of imaginative power for him; and it was not unlikely that he had spent weeks in evolving the brilliant fiction.

I did not expect to be left alone and unguarded for any great length of time. My persecutor knew

that I had some enterprise about me, and that I would not tamely submit to my imprisonment. Perhaps he noticed that I wore light shoes, and should not be likely to kick the door down with them, as I might if I had on thick cowhide boots. I picked up the narrow strip of board I had removed from the window; it was very heavy for its size. If I had got a purchase on the door of the room, I could have pried it down; but there was no chance to get hold of it.

Possibly there was something in the closet that would aid me. I opened the door. As I did so, an ugly-looking snake darted out into the room. He coiled himself up in one corner of the room and showed fight, while I fled to the opposite corner.

CHAPTER IX.

A BATTLE WITH THE SERPENT.

I HAD no idea what the snake was, for I had never seen one of that kind before. I am not particularly afraid of snakes, though they are very disagreeable to me. When I was at work in the field as a farmer, I suppose I never lost an opportunity to kill one that came in my way. But all these were harmless reptiles, and of late years I have not been disposed to meddle with them.

The snake that introduced himself to me so unexpectedly was not more than three feet long. He was of a greenish-brown color, with some yellow on the sides. I had the strip of board I had taken from the window in my hand when the reptile darted out of the closet. I don't think he had any particular intentions, at first, except to get out of his prison, as I had to get out of mine. I could not blame him for anything he had done so far. Like myself, he was a prisoner, and we ought to have been in full sympathy with each other.

I had released his snakeship from one prison, and placed him so much nearer to entire freedom. To this extent I was entitled to his gratitude, though I did not expect much of him. As he darted out of the closet, I sprang from his path into the corner of the room, behind the hall-door. The next instant he was coiled into a round heap. Then he raised his head from the middle of the coil about a foot, as it seemed to me, though it could hardly have been so high.

So far from feeling anything like gratitude for the favor I had done him, the villain made war upon me. Suddenly he made a spring at me; but I had both eyes wide open, and was watching him with the most intense anxiety. As he leaped, I hit him with the stick in my hand; and he fetched up against the wall, on the inside of the closet. I have no doubt his striking against the partition caused some confusion in his ideas: at any rate, he dropped on the floor, and began to wriggle about in such a manner as no decent snake would, unless his ideas were confused.

My curiosity in regard to that identical snake was entirely satisfied, and I made haste to close the closet-door. I felt that I had no further business with that snake. It has taken me some time to

tell about this reptile; but I think the villain was not out of the closet more than three seconds; at any rate, it was a very few seconds. He did business with great rapidity. He had lost no time in coming out of his prison, and none in making his attack on me. He had wasted no time in conducting operations; and if I had not had the bit of board in my hand, I am afraid the snake would have got the better of me.

At the time I had no acquaintance with this snake, though he never waits for a formal introduction when he means business. I know now that he was a moccasin. I saw many of them in the woods of Florida. They are as venomous as the rattlesnake, and are even more dreaded by many people, for they give no notice of their intention to strike. In the English books of natural history this snake is called the water viper. The copperhead is one of the same sort.

I felt as happy as the patron saint of Ireland must have felt after he had boxed up the old serpent, and sunk him at the bottom of the lake. I had the enemy where he could not harm me, for it was not possible for him to make his way through the door. I took the precaution to see that there were no holes or cracks through which the snake

could again force himself into my unwilling company. I could find no opening of any kind. For the present I felt entirely safe.

Though I did not know anything about the kind of snake I was shut up with, I felt from the beginning that he was poisonous, and that his bite would make an end of me. I had closeted him; and now I had time to consider the situation. I came promptly to the conclusion that he was put into that closet for my benefit. The conspiracy seemed to be almost too crafty for Captain Boomsby; though I knew that he was capable of doing such a thing.

When I had considered this subject for a few minutes, I found my blood boiling with indignation. Before I saw the snake, I was more inclined to regard the whole trick in the light of a practical joke, rather than as a serious matter. It seemed to me just then that my ancient enemy, in his bargain with Carrington, intended to resort to some such device to get rid of me.

I did not intend to spend the night in that attic chamber; and when my blood began to boil, I aimed a blow at one of the panels of the door with the heavy stick in my hand. The thin board that formed this part of the door split under the blow.

A Battle with the Serpent. Page 94.

I followed it up as though I had been chopping wood. The panel shivered under the vigorous assault I made upon it. In a minute, I had a hole through. Inserting my stick in the opening, I pried out the rest of the panel. But the hole was not big enough to admit the passage of my body.

I had hardly succeeded in making a breach in the door, before I heard the most lusty screams in the lower part of the house. I had no difficulty in recognizing the voice of Mrs. Boomsby. She heard the noise of my bombardment, and was calling her husband in her usual affectionate manner. But I was not at all disturbed by the outcry. I was even willing they should bring the police to their assistance. But I did not expect any outside aid would be called in, for that would do the Boomsbys more harm than it would me. In a word, I did not care who came: I intended to break my way out of my prison, all the same.

Placing my stick edgeways in the opening I had made, I had a good leverage, the end of the bar being outside of the stile of the door, and the face of it against the middle piece. I pushed against the end of the lever with all the power I had. The middle stile snapped in the mortise, for the whole door was not more than an inch and a quarter thick.

I had broken out the mortise, and the lever went "home." I could no longer apply the implement with effect, and I expected every minute to see the portly form of Captain Boomsby on the stairs, hurrying up to save his prisoner. But I had no fear of him: if he attempted to prevent my departure, I should use the stick as an argument with him, as I had done with the door.

Finding I could no longer use the lever to advantage, I grasped the middle piece of the door with both hands, and gave a desperate pull at it. There were no nails or pins to resist me, and the parts of the door snapped like pipe-stems. I wrenched out the middle piece, and then the other panel. Then I had an opening in the door eighteen inches wide, which was almost enough to permit the passage of my fat foe.

The middle piece and both panels of the upper part of the door lay in many pieces on the floor, in the room, and in the hall. I used all reasonable haste in making my way through the opening I had forced. When I was in the hall, I began to feel good-natured again; for I will not deny that I was mad when I realized my relations with that snake. I did not care a straw for Captain Boomsby. If it came to the worst, I believed I could "handle"

him, to use his own choice phrase, with the aid of the stick in my hand. I was determined not to let the piece of hard pine go out of my hands while I remained in the house.

Mrs. Boomsby was still shouting for "Parker Boomsby," for she always called him by his full name when she was excited. I was willing she should shout. I felt quite cool, composed, and pleasant. I was ready to make an orderly retreat from the house. But I had not lost all interest in that snake, which I believed was intended for my executioner. I put my head into the opening I had made in the door. I found I could reach the door of the closet; and with a very hasty movement I threw it wide open.

I wondered whether or not I had killed his snakeship when I poked him back into his prison. The last I had seen of him he was wriggling on the floor, stirring himself up in the most lively manner. But the reptile immediately proved that I had not killed him by darting out into the room as lively as he had done the same thing before. I did not believe it was possible for him to get out through the opening by which I had escaped from my prison; but I was not quite willing to wait to test the question. The villain could crawl like most

other snakes with which I was familiar, but he also had a talent for leaping. I considered it wise and prudent to begin my retreat without any delay.

I took a last look at the snake. He had retreated to the corner of the room opposite the closet-door and coiled himself up, with his head in the centre. He kept his eyes fixed on me, or I fancied he did. He looked as ugly as sin itself. He seemed to me to be as near like Captain Boomsby as one pin is like another. They both did business on the same principle. Mentally I bade him an affectionate adieu. So far as I was concerned, he seemed to have none of the serpent's power of fascination, for I had not the slightest inclination to continue gazing at him after I had gratified my curiosity. I descended the upper flight of stairs. The doors of the rooms on this floor were all open, and I saw that the two rear chambers were furnished as bedrooms.

I went into one of these rooms, and seated myself in a chair. Mrs. Boomsby was on the floor below, standing at the head of the stairs, calling for her husband. It has taken me a long time to record the incidents of my escape so far, and my reflections upon them; but when I looked at my watch I found that only eight minutes had elapsed

since I consulted it before, at half past five. Probably it was not five minutes from the time I first saw the snake till I was seated in the chair in the room below. The lady of the house had not, therefore, stood a great while in her present position. Her husband had had time enough to come up-stairs since he was first called, but he probably had a customer in the saloon.

As I sat in the chair, I suddenly began to wonder whether snakes had a talent for coming down-stairs. The idea was just a little bit appalling, for I had no desire to meet his snakeship again. Neither the stairs nor the halls were carpeted. If he came down in the usual way, I should be likely to hear him tumbling down the steps. But I rejected this idea; for on further reflection I concluded that a snake would not come down like a man, when there was a better way for one of his habits to accomplish the purpose. Whatever the villain was, if he came down at all, he would take to the stair-rail. I felt sure of this, for it seemed to be the most natural thing for a snake to do.

I could not see how the snake was to get out of the room. I did not think he could crawl up to the opening I had made, for there was nothing for him to fasten to in his ascent. It did not seem to

me that he could get out unless he made a flying leap through the opening. I was by no means sure he could not do this; and I did not care to wait for him to experiment on the matter. Just then it occurred to me that I was not the only person liable to be bitten by that snake. As I thought of it, I walked down the stairs. I knew that Mrs. Boomsby had a mortal terror of snakes when I lived with the family.

She confronted me in the hall of the second story.

CHAPTER X.

THE FELLOW IN THE LOCK-UP.

"YOU abominable wretch!" exclaimed Mrs. Boomsby, placing her arms akimbo, and looking at me with the utmost ferocity, so that between her and the snake I found there was little choice. "What are you a-doin' in my house?"

"Getting out of it, Mrs. Boomsby," I replied, with the good-nature I had been nursing up-stairs for several minutes.

I wondered whether she knew anything about the snake. The bare thought was enough to assure me that she did not. She would no more have permitted the captain, or any other person, to bring the most harmless reptile into the house, than she would have opened her sleeping apartment for the reception of the sea-serpent, in which both she and her husband believed as in the ocean itself.

"What are you a-doin' here? Can't you let us be here no more'n you could in Michigan? Must

you pursue us wherever we go?" demanded the lady, putting the matter in an entirely new light to me, for I believed I had always been able and willing to keep away from the Boomsbys.

"I was invited up-stairs to see you," I began.

"Don't tell me that! Do you think I live in the garret?"

"I thought we were going rather high up; but I supposed Captain Boomsby knew where to find you," I replied, smiling as sweetly as though there were no snakes in the Land of Flowers. "But it seems that your husband lured me up there to make a prisoner of me. He locked me into the little room in the rear attic, which he had fitted up for me by screwing boards over the window."

"Don't tell me such a ry-dicerlous story! I don't believe a word on't. Nobody ever could believe a word you say, Sandy Duddleton!"

"You know very well that I was up there; for I heard your husband tell you so. You talked with him about it, and insisted upon seeing me. But I don't wish to dispute about this matter with you, for I don't think you understand all his plans," I replied, moving towards the head of the stairs, while she planted herself before me so as to prevent my going down.

"Don't talk to me, Sandy Duddleton!"

"I won't talk to you if you will get out of my way, and let me out of the house," I replied, trying to get by her.

"What be you go'n' to do with that stick?" she asked, as she placed herself in front of me.

But I saw that she had a reasonable respect for the stick, and she was milder than I had seen her twenty times before. I looked about me to see if there was any other flight of stairs which would take me to the street, or to the back yard, which opened into a lane by the shore of the river. From the lower hall a door opened into the saloon; and this was the way by which I had come up. I stood in the hall with my back to a door, which I concluded must lead to the rear of the house. Without turning around, I opened this door.

"What be you a-doin'?" demanded Mrs. Boomsby, when she saw that she was flanked; for a glance behind me revealed the back stairs. "Parker Boomsby, come right up here, this minute!" she called down the front stairs.

"I won't trouble the captain," I interposed. "I have a word to say to you before I go, Mrs. Boomsby. "I don't think you knew there was a

snake about three feet long in the room where your husband made me a prisoner."

"A snake!" gasped the lady of the house, starting back with alarm. "I don't believe a word on't!"

But she did believe it, whatever she said.

"Yes, a snake; and I have no doubt he is a poisonous one, put there to bite me, and make an end of me, so that the captain could get possession of the steam-yacht!" I continued, rather vigorously, for I was afraid I should be interrupted by the coming of the captain.

"A snake in this house! a pizen one, too!" groaned Mrs. Boomsby.

"He was put in the closet; and when I opened the door he came out and made a spring at me. I left him in that room."

"Didn't you kill him, Sandy Duddleton? You used to kill snakes."

"I didn't kill this one, though I struck at him. I broke through the door, and, for aught I know, the snake is following me down-stairs," I replied deliberately. "I think you will see him coming down on the stair-rail."

She did not wait to hear any more, but, with a tremendous scream, rushed by me, bolted into the

front room, and closed and locked the door behind her. I certainly did not wish the reptile to bite her or her children; but I did not think there was much danger of the villain getting out of the room through the opening I had made in the door.

The scream of the stout lady did not appear to move her husband, who was probably used to this sort of thing. I had put her on her guard in case the snake did work his way out of the room and down the stairs. I had done my duty, and I walked leisurely down to the hall. The door leading into the saloon was still wide open. The uses of this door were many and various. I had been not a little surprised in some of the Southern cities to notice that the drinking-saloons were all closed on Sunday. In some of them not even a cigar could be bought at the hotel on that day.

Doubtless the law was as strict in Jacksonville as elsewhere; but I had noticed that every saloon had a side door for Sunday use. The front door of the house was closed on other days; on Sunday it was left open, as an intimation that the saloon could be reached in that way. I thought of this Sunday rum-selling as I noticed the arrangement of the doors. Of course the police understood it.

I approached the door opening into the saloon, for I heard the voice of my former tyrant. I wanted to assure him that I was happy still, and that he had better look out for the snake before he bit any of his family.

"He never could get out of there in this world!" exclaimed Captain Boomsby, as I was about to enter the saloon.

"Do you think so, Captain Boomsby?" I coolly asked, as I walked into the room.

To my astonishment, the person to whom the Captain's remark appeared to be addressed was Mr. Kirby Cornwood, whom I had left on board of the Sylvania, asleep under the awning. The Floridian was evidently as much astonished to see me as I was to see him.

"We were speaking of a fellow who was arrested last night," said Cornwood, with one of his blandest smiles. "I think he will get out of the lock-up in less than three days; but the keeper of this place remarked that he would never get out in this world. Only a slight difference of opinion."

"I tell you the fellow will never get out; he isn't smart enough in the first place, and the lock-up is stronger than you think for, Mr.—I

don't know 's I know your name, though I cal'late I have seen you somewhere afore," added Captain Boomsby.

"I reckon you have seen me here before," replied Cornwood, taking his card from his pocket and presenting it to the captain.

"I can't read it without my glasses," said the saloon-keeper, holding the card off at arm's length.

"My name is Kirby Cornwood," added the Floridian.

"Well, Mr. Corngood, do you —"

"My name is Cornwood," interposed the guide.

"I beg your parding, Mr. Cornwool."

"Cornwood," repeated the owner of that name, rather indignantly.

"All right, Mr. Cornwood. Do you want to bet sunthin' that man won't git out within three days?" continued Captain Boomsby.

"I don't care to bet on it; in fact I never bet," replied Mr. Cornwood, glancing at me, as though he expected me to approve this position, which I certainly did, though I said nothing.

"I will bet five dollars agin three the feller gits out in less than three days, Mr. Woodcorn," persisted Captain Boomsby.

I could not see what the captain was driving at,

unless it was to vex the Floridian by miscalling his name. I had known him to do the same thing before. If my old tyrant had manifested some surprise at first at seeing me, he seemed to have got over it very quickly. I was very glad indeed to be satisfied that Cornwood had no knowledge of my imprisonment in the attic, as I supposed he had when I entered the saloon. I had employed him, and was then paying him five dollars a day for doing nothing. I did not wish to believe that he was a friend of my ancient enemy.

"Captain Boomsby, I had to break a hole through the door of the room in which you locked me, in order to get out," I said, as soon as I had an opportunity to get in a word.

"Then you must pay for it, for the landlord will charge it to me," said he, promptly.

"I think not; and if it were not for the time it would take, I would complain of you at the police office. I don't know what kind of a snake it was you put into the closet for my benefit; but I think you will find him running about your house by this time," I replied. "I gave Mrs. Boomsby warning of the danger, and she has locked herself into her room."

"What snake, Sandy Duddleton? What you

talking about?" demanded the captain. But I could see that he was not a little disturbed by the information.

"You put a poisonous snake into the closet of that room where you locked me in. You expected me to open the door of the closet, and let him out. I did open the closet-door and let him out; but I did not give him a chance to bite me," I continued, rehearsing the facts for the benefit of Cornwood rather than my tyrant.

"What on airth are you talking about, Sandy? I don't know nothin' about no snake," protested Captain Boomsby.

"I think you know all about the snake, and that you put him there for my benefit. I have nothing further to say about the matter, except that the creature is still in your house, and that he will bite one of your children as readily as he would me. I advise you to attend to the matter, and have him killed," I continued, moving toward the door.

"Stop a minute, Sandy," called my persecutor. "What sort of a snake was it?"

"I don't know; I never saw one like it before."

"I guess I know sunthin' about it, arter all," said Captain Boomsby, with a troubled look.

"I had a lodger in the house, and he had an attic room. He had a lot of young alligators, rattlesnakes, lizards, and other critters; and I let him put 'em in that room. He screwed the boards over the winder so they couldn't git out. I cal'late this was one of his snakes."

I had no doubt this story was all an invention, but I had no means of showing to the contrary. He begged me to go up-stairs, and help him kill the "varmint;" but I declined to do this, for I was not willing again to make myself the victim of his treachery. The captain called his son Nicholas from the front shop, which was a cigar store, and told him to look out for the bar.

Before he could go up-stairs two black policemen entered the saloon, armed with sticks. Mrs. Boomsby had told them what the matter was, and they had come in to kill the reptile. I left the premises, followed by Cornwood.

CHAPTER XI.

THE HON. PARDON TIFFANY'S WARNING.

I LEARNED the next day, from one of the negro policemen who had been called in, that the snake had got out of the room where I left him, and that he had been found on the stair-rail, a floor below where I had confronted him. My informant told me he had killed him as he was crawling along the rail, on his way down another flight.

"He was only tryin' to git away, sah," added the policeman. "Dey allus run away when dey can, dem moccasins do; but dey spring at folks, and bite when dey git cornered. Awful bad snake, sah. Wuss'n a rattlesnake. Bite kill a man, suah."

When I left the saloon, I walked with Cornwood to the post-office. When we were in the street, he volunteered the opinion that Captain Boomsby was the greatest scoundrel in Jacksonville; and without going into the comparative merits of the question, I was not disposed to dispute the point.

Cornwood seemed to feel relieved after he had expressed this opinion, and the subject was dropped.

I had told a colored clerk in the post-office to keep all letters for me until my return, for when we left Jacksonville I could not tell where we were going, and I expected to be back a month sooner. He greeted me very politely when I presented myself at the window, and handed me a large package of letters, secured with a rubber band. I thanked him for his kindness; and I must add that this one and another colored clerk I saw in Charleston, were more polite and gentlemanly than many a white clerk I have encountered in more northern cities.

Though I had received no letters for over two months, I had not failed to write them regularly to Mr. Brickland, and to my father since I had been assured that he was still living. I looked over the package that had been handed to me. There were two from my father. My heart thrilled with emotion when I recognized the handwriting. I thought no more of Captain Boomsby and his snake.

"Will there be anything I can do for you to-day or to-night, Captain Garningham?" asked Cornwood, as I stood looking at the outside of my letters.

"Nothing," I replied.

"Then I think I will sleep on shore, if you have no objection," he added.

"None whatever," I answered; and with the bundle of letters in my hand, I was glad to get rid of him, for he was rather officious, and often interrupted me in my state-room when there was not the least need of it.

Cornwood raised his Panama hat, bowed politely to me, and then hastened out of the building. He had hardly disappeared before the Hon. Mr. Tiffany came into the office. He dropped some letters into the box, and then approached me with a smiling face. All I had seen of this gentleman pleased me very much. My father called him his best friend in the letter of introduction brought to me. For this reason, if for no other, I should have respected and esteemed him; but I was not glad to see him at this moment. I wanted to be alone with my letters.

"Good evening, Captain Alick," said he. "I see you have a large packet of letters, and I won't interrupt you but for a moment. Are you going on board of the steamer now?"

"Yes, sir; I thought I would go on board and read my letters. Two of them are from my father — the first I have received from him for many

months," I replied, wishing to have him understand my situation fully.

"I will not keep you from them a moment," he added, considerately. "But I suppose you will not attempt to read them till you go on board?"

"No, sir," I answered, putting the two letters from my father into my breast-pocket, with my most valuable papers, and dropping the others into a side-pocket. "I can't read them very well in the street."

"Then I will walk with you to your boat," continued Mr. Tiffany.

"I shall go to the wharf on which the market is located, and hail the steamer. I have found that is the best place to land."

We left the office, and walked up the street. My companion evidently had something to say to me, and had possibly started to go on board for the purpose of seeing me. I did not feel much interest in anything he might have to say under the circumstances.

"Just before I joined you in the post-office, I saw you with Mr. Cornwood. Pray don't think I wish to meddle impertinently with your affairs, Captain Alick," said Mr. Tiffany; and he seemed to be somewhat embarrassed about saying what he wished to say.

"By no means, sir," I replied, beginning to feel an interest in the conversation; but rather on account of the manner than the matter of what he said.

"Then if you won't take offence, I wish to say that I desire to warn you in regard to this man Cornwood," continued the friend of my father.

"You desire to warn me in regard to Mr. Cornwood!" I exclaimed, stopping short on the sidewalk, so great was my surprise at his words, as well as his manner.

"I beg you will not take any offence at what I say, Captain Alick, for I assure you I have nothing but the best of motives towards you," protested Mr. Tiffany, as we resumed our walk.

"I shall not take offence at anything you say, sir," I answered.

"After the very great service you have rendered me, you must think I am inhuman to be ungrateful to you so soon," continued Mr. Tiffany. "I assure you there is nothing like ingratitude in my heart; and I would wrong myself a thousand times before I would wrong you once."

"I believe every word you say, sir: and it has not even occurred to me to suspect your motives," I replied with energy. "The letter you brought

me from my father would cause me to put entire confidence in you; but without that, I should not for an instant suspect you of anything unworthy towards me, or anybody else. When you warned me against Mr. Cornwood, I was surprised on account of something which occurred this afternoon."

"I shall not even ask you what occurred this afternoon; and you may keep your own counsel in regard to Mr. Cornwood. I repeat that I have not the least desire to meddle with your affairs."

"As the best friend of my father, I am sure I should value your advice and counsel very highly."

"I do not often counsel or advise anybody out of my own family, unless I am asked to do so. Here is the market wharf; and I have said all I have to say in regard to Mr. Cornwood. I only desire to warn you to keep your eyes wide open in dealing with him, for I learned from Owen that you have engaged the Florida person for your journey up the river."

"Do you know anything about him, Mr. Tifany?" I asked, as much surprised to hear that he had nothing more to say as I had been, in the first place, to learn that he had anything to say in regard to the guide.

"I can't say that I do," he replied, with a rather vacant look.

"Why do you warn me against him, then?"

"That is certainly a very pertinent question, Captain Alick. I have no right to say anything against this person, for I know nothing against him. While I will not harm him, I warn you to look out for him."

"I suppose you must have some reason for what you say," I added, as I waved my handkerchief in the direction of the Sylvania, as a signal for a boat.

"Undoubtedly I have some reason for what I say. It may be enough to cause me to suspect him. I have only asked you to look out for him, for I do not feel at liberty to utter a word to his disparagement until I know it is true."

Mr. Tiffany seemed to be very earnest in what he said; but I was disappointed because he did not say more. He had been in Jacksonville a week before he went to St. Augustine; and it was possible that he had seen something of the guide during his stay.

"I see that you are not quite satisfied with what I have said. I cannot blame you for feeling so; but I should blame myself if I said anything more about this man," continued my father's friend. "I make no charge against Cornwood; I only say, as I might if we were facing a strange snake, he may

do us harm, and we must look out for ourselves. Really, that is all I can say about the matter."

By this time the port boat had come up to the wharf. Mr. Tiffany bade me good night, and hastened up the pier. I was not satisfied, as he had suggested. He suspected Cornwood of something, but he did not even say what, much less give me the grounds for his suspicion. But I could obtain no more, and went into the boat. In a few minutes I was on the deck of the steamer. My supper was all ready, and I was obliged to attend to it before I looked at my letters.

My state-room was lighted, and I was by myself. At last I was alone with my letters. Washburn was on the forward deck, discussing the condition of the South with Griffin Leeds. I took out the two letters from my father. Both of them were mailed in London, though my father's home was in Shalford, Essex, about fifty miles from the great city. One was postmarked December 15th, and the other January 2d. I opened the one of the earliest date.

It was written immediately after his return to England from India. He had received no letters or intelligence of any kind from me for many months. He had been so worried about me that

he could hardly stay to complete his business in India. He found nothing from me on his arrival at his home, nothing at the office of his solicitor, to whom all my letters had been forwarded, in London. He wrote that he found Mr. Carrington had gone to America, and his office was in charge of his confidential clerk.

I understood it all. This clerk must have destroyed all my letters to my father as soon as they reached the office, as he had been instructed to do by his employer. I felt sick at heart when I realized the distress of my father at getting no tidings from me. But since I sailed on this cruise from Detroit, six months before, I had supposed he was dead, and of course I wrote no letters to him.

I took up the second letter, expecting to read more of my father's despair on account of my long silence. I opened it: it was bright and cheerful as the first was gloomy and despondent. He had received my "welcome letter of December 4th," which I had written at Jacksonville, after the discovery of all the details of the conspiracy against me. I had written a full account of the matter, with the history of the voyage up to that date. It was after Colonel Shepard's house had been damaged by fire, and the West India trip had been

arranged. I had asked him to write me at Jacksonville, but not to be alarmed if he did not hear from me for some time, for I hardly knew where we were going. He had been amazed at the contents of my letter. The clerk had confessed all to him. I was entirely satisfied with the conclusion of the matter. The rest of the letters were from my friends at the North.

CHAPTER XII.

SUGGESTIONS OF ANOTHER CONSPIRACY.

I FELT like a beleaguered general who had just opened communication with his reinforcements, when I again found myself holding intercourse, even by letter, with my father. It seemed as though a new life had begun for me. My father was happy, and so was I. He declared that he should join me as soon as his business would allow him to leave England; and that when he found me, as he should wherever I wandered, he never would leave me again.

My father alluded at considerable length to "his best and truest friend," Mr. Tiffany. He had written to him, and desired him to take an interest in my affairs if he thought I needed any assistance, either with money or counsel. This was a partial explanation of the conduct of Mr. Tiffany; but he was a very strange man because he said nothing to me about his instructions from my father.

Before I had finished reading the rest of my

letters, Washburn came into the room; but when he saw I was engaged, he began to retire. I asked him to remain. He was my ever-faithful friend. He had fathomed the conspiracy against me, and I valued his counsel more than that of any other person. He had my fullest confidence, though he never sought to know my business.

I related to him all the incidents of my visit to the city, including a full account of my adventures with the Boomsbys and the other snake. I need not say that he was intensely interested.

"That Boomsby ought to be hung!" he exclaimed, as soon as I had finished my story.

"Perhaps not," I replied, giving the captain's explanation of the presence of the snake in the closet.

"I should like to follow that lodger's history, if Captain Boomsby had any such person in his house, which I do not believe," added the mate. "When I go on shore I will try to find out whether or not he had any lodger, and I think I can get at it."

"It is hardly worth the trouble," I replied.

"I think it is. For months we have been satisfied that this villain means you harm; but we have never been able to prove anything," said Washburn, with energy. "It is time to quit fooling with such

matters. If he did not mean to sink the Sylvania for your benefit, he never meant anything in his life; but he explained it away, and everybody that knows anything about it, except you and I, believes that the accident was simply the result of his drunken condition on that morning. It is time to prove some of these things."

"I have no objection to having them proved."

"I will spend all the time I have on shore in this business; and I am — What was that?"

The mate suddenly jumped from his chair, and rushed out of the room by the new door on the port side. I followed him.

"What are you doing at that window?" demanded Washburn, to a man he had collared near the door of the engine-room, for he had pluck enough to pick up a water moccasin, if the occasion required.

I could not make out the man in the darkness; and I did not quite comprehend the reason for his sudden assault on him. All the windows of our state-room were open, for the evening was warm.

"I wasn't doing anything, Mr. Washburn," pleaded the culprit, in whose voice I recognized that of Griffin Leeds.

"You were standing under the open window of

the captain's room!" continued the mate, releasing his hold on the waiter when he found he offered no resistance.

"No, sir; I wasn't standing there," replied Griffin, in a meeching tone. "I got asleep on the fo'castle after you went in; and I just waked up. I was just going below to turn in when you came out and got hold of me. That's the whole of it, sir."

"If I ever catch you under an open window again, I will throw you overboard. We don't have anything of that kind on board of this steamer," said the mate, in a very decided tone.

Griffin went below to his quarters under the forecastle, and Washburn followed me into the room. I thought he was a little rough on the new waiter, who had given excellent satisfaction in the forward cabin. I said as much as this to the mate.

"The rascal was listening under that window to the talk between you and me," replied Washburn. "If you agree to have that thing done on board, you are the captain, and I have nothing more to say about it."

"If you are satisfied that he was listening to us, you did just right. But I move to amend by substituting his discharge for throwing him overboard,"

I replied, laughing. "Do you think the fellow heard what we were saying?"

"I have no doubt of it: he had been there for some time, for I heard a slight noise at that window soon after I came in; and I am confident he had been there ever since. I confess that I do not like the fellow very much, for I have seen him skulking about the deck with a hang-dog look which I don't admire. I have suspected him of something, though I don't know what, since the first day he came on board. While I am in for it, Alick, I might as well add that Cornwood is just such another fellow."

"Cornwood?" I asked, very much surprised, for I had not noticed anything in either the Floridian or the waiter to attract my attention.

"I don't know anything about Cornwood; and I suppose you looked up his record before you engaged him. At any rate, he acts like a snake, in my way of thinking," added the mate, whom none could accuse of covering up anything he believed or thought.

"I did inquire about him in St. Augustine: people thought well of his knowledge and ability, though they agree that he is a brag and a boaster."

"If there were nothing worse than that about

him, I should only laugh. But I think he is a snake."

"What makes you think so?"

"I don't know; I only know that I do think so."

"But you are not a fellow to think ill of anybody without some reason for it."

"I have no reason, except his looks and actions," replied the mate. "I make no charges against him, and I can prove nothing; but Cornwood is a fellow that will bear watching."

"That is just what the Hon. Pardon Tiffany took the trouble to tell me this afternoon," I added, relating the particulars of my interview with that gentleman.

"I am glad there is some one besides myself who has an opinion on the subject," said Washburn.

"Cornwood was in Captain Boomsby's rumhole when I came down stairs after the row in the attic," I added, watching the face of my friend to notice the effect of this announcement.

"That's the best place for him; only this fellow will do a piece of treachery better than Boomsby can. Cornwood will not get drunk when he has a heavy job of iniquity on his hands. Boomsby is a wolf: this fellow is a snake. Cornwood reminds me of a kind of reptile they have in these parts,

called the small rattlesnake. He is a little fellow, and you can't hear his rattle; but his bite will kill you as quick as that of a five-footer. You can't see or hear him, and the first thing you know you are a dead man. That's Cornwood's style, as I understand him."

"You are rough on him. What you say of him, and what you have done to Griffin, remind me that the two men seemed to have some connection before we engaged either of them," I continued, thinking of the events of that first day in St. Augustine. "Griffin brought off Cornwood in a boat."

"And when you apply to Cornwood for a stewardess, Griffin's wife appears to take the place. But I am bound to say I believe she is a lady," added the mate.

"Then you think we are marching into hot water, do you, Washburn?" I asked with interest.

"I don't say you are: I don't know that you are: only that we had better keep our eyes wide open, as Mr. Tiffany suggests. But it does look to me as though some sort of a storm is brewing."

"But where can the storm possibly come from?"

"From that rumhole in Bay Street which you visited this afternoon. I have heard that Boomsby threatened a dozen times to be the destruction of

you. He says you have been the plague of his life; that you have crossed and defeated him so many times that he will be the 'ruination' of you yet. This is out of pure revenge. Besides this, he believes your father is dead, and that, if he can get you out of the way, or bring you into subjection to what he calls his authority, this steamer will come into his possession. I know he is a fool; but he believes all this nonsense."

"Then you mean to suggest—without being able to prove it—that Cornwood is an agent of Captain Boomsby; and that Griffin Leeds is a tool of Cornwood, sent on board to watch me, as well as to wait on the fore-cabin table," I added, putting the various hints into words.

"I don't say it means anything; but that is what it means, if anything," replied Washburn after some hesitation. "Nothing can be proved; and we should not be justified in doing anything on mere suspicion. All we have to do is to keep a close watch on Cornwood and Griffin Leeds."

We agreed to do this, but in such a manner as not to alarm the conspirators, if they were such. I told Washburn then that I had letters from my father, and gave him both of them to read. While he was thus engaged, I began a letter to my father.

"The last one is written in good spirits," said the mate, as he laid the letters on my table. "But isn't it a little strange that you have no letter of later date than last January from your father? I should have supposed there would have been three or four more letters awaiting you; I mean those he must have written in January."

"I think there is nothing strange about that," I replied; but my heart sank within me at the very thought of any more doubts and uncertainties. "I wrote him that the Sylvania was bound to the Bahamas; but I had no idea where we should go next, or how long we should remain at any place to which we might go. I said we expected to return to Jacksonville in February."

"That explains the matter. You did not show me your letter to him," replied the mate. "But we are several days into March, and you ought to hear from your father again very soon."

"I shall expect a letter from him every day until I get one. I don't believe anything more can happen to him or me, for we have had our full share of mishaps."

The mate was turning in for the night, when Buck Lingley brought me a note from Owen, which had just been sent off by a boatman. My

cousin had arranged for an excursion to Fort George Island, near the mouth of the St. Johns River, for the next day at ten, if the weather was favorable. He expected about thirty people, and wanted dinner for them. I told Buck to carry the letter to the steward, that he might make his purchases of provisions early in the morning. It was one o'clock when I turned in, after finishing a twelve-page letter to my father.

CHAPTER XIII.

MR. COBBINGTON AND HIS PET RATTLESNAKE.

I TURNED out the next morning, or rather the same morning, only in season for breakfast. I had put my letter in the mail-box, and it had gone ashore in the first boat at four o'clock. I kept an anchor watch all night in port, which was divided up amongst all hands in the sailing and engineer's department, except myself. Word had been passed from watch to watch to call the steward and a boat's crew at half past three. The boats were hoisted up to the davits at night, and it required some time to get one into the water.

When I went in to breakfast, I found that Washburn had gone ashore in the steward's boat, and had not yet returned. He was the only person on board, besides myself, who had liberty to leave the vessel without my permission, or his, if I was not on board. But the steamer had been put in perfect order the day before, and she never was in

better condition than when I looked her over after breakfast. The day was bright and clear, as nearly all the days were in Florida. Every officer and seaman had put on his best uniform, and we were in "show" order, above and below decks.

The American flag was flying at the peak, and, in honor of the English guests who were to come on board, I had hoisted the British flag at the fore. Both boats' crews were in readiness to bring off the party as soon as they appeared on the Market Wharf. About nine o'clock we got a signal from that locality, but there was no party there, and the signal came from the mate.

"You went off early, Washburn," I said, as he came up the gangway steps.

"I was afraid the matter would get cold if I waited," replied the mate, who seemed to be in excellent humor.

"What matter is that?" I inquired.

"I went ashore to look up that snaky lodger of Captain Boomsby's," answered Washburn. "There was certainly a lodger there, who furnished his own room, and stayed about two weeks."

"Did he furnish his room for a stay of only two weeks?" I inquired.

"I have not been able to find the person yet.

He had his furniture carried to an auction-room, where it was sold."

"How did you learn all this?"

"I found Boomsby's saloon first. About five o'clock the porter of the store next to it began to sweep off the sidewalk. I saw that my uniform took his eye, and he was as polite to me as though I had been an admiral in the United States Navy. I talked with him awhile, asking him questions about the city. Finally I brought the matter of the conversation down to the subject of saloons. I thought there were plenty of them. He told me some of them had a separate bar for colored people, where they sold the cheapest corn whiskey and apple brandy for ten cents a glass, and made nine cents on every glass they sold."

"That's just the business for Captain Boomsby: it is just mean enough for him," I added.

"The porter spoke of the Boomsby saloon as a new one opened a few weeks before. The keeper had a bar for colored customers in a back room, with an entrance from the lane in the rear. When he said this, I began to pump him in regard to Boomsby. I finally asked if the captain took boarders or lodgers. He had one; but this one had had a quarrel with the saloonist's wife, and had

left. He did not know his name, or where he went to. He said the cartman that stood at the next corner had carted off his furniture."

"Then you went for the cartman," I suggested.

"I went for him; but I could not find him for some time, and that is what made me so late," continued Washburn. "The porter told me he was hauling baggage from the Charleston steamer, which had just got in, to the Carlton Hotel. His name was Jackman, and it was on his wagon. I found the cartman, but he was so busy I had no chance to speak to him until half past eight. I took my breakfast at the Carlton, which is kept by Maine people. I introduced myself to one of the proprietors; and of course they knew my father. I told him I had been waiting a long time to speak to Jackman. He immediately called him into the office.

"Thus introduced to Jackman, he was willing to tell me all he knew on any subject. He said he had carried the furniture of the lodger to an auction-room, and his trunks and other things to the St. Johns House. The lodger's name was Cobbington; and Jackman thought he was poor."

"He must have been, to take a room at Captain Boomsby's house."

"I asked Jackman what things besides the trunks he had carried to the St. Johns Hotel. He replied that Cobbington had a pet rattlesnake and a box of alligators."

"All this goes to confirm Captain Boomsby's explanation," I added.

"I think it has a tendency that way. I asked Jackman if the lodger had any other snakes; but he knew of no others, and had seen none in the attic rooms from which he took his load. I went next to the St. Johns House, which is kept by a lady. She gave me all the information she could. Mr. Cobbington's rattlesnake had got out of his box, and had been killed by one of the boarders. He was so angry at the loss of the reptile that he left the house at once. The landlady did not know where he had gone. Under the circumstances, she had not taken the pains to inquire. She did not want any gentleman in her house who kept a rattlesnake in his chamber; and I was of just her way of thinking. She did not remember what cartman had conveyed his baggage from the house. If I had had an hour more, I think I could have found the man; for the landlady gave me the day on which he left."

"I don't think it will be of much use to follow

the matter any further," I suggested. "This story makes it probable that Cobbington had other snakes."

"It may make it possible, but not probable. It is only a matter of fact, and I am going to get to the bottom of it if I can," persisted the mate.

"I beg pardon, Mr. Washburn, but your breakfast is waiting for you," said Griffin Leeds, stepping up to the mate at this moment.

I started when I heard the silky voice of the octoroon. I had heard no step to indicate his approach, and I feared that he had listened to something one of us had said.

"I have been to breakfast," replied the mate, rather savagely for him; and I saw that he had the same fear.

The waiter hastened back to the forward cabin, where he belonged. Washburn called to Ben Bowman, who was standing at the door of the engine-room, and asked him how long Griffin had stood behind us. The assistant engineer thought he had been there two or three minutes, at least, waiting for a chance to speak to one of us. I was vexed at the circumstance. If Cornwood was the agent of Captain Boomsby, and Griffin Leeds was the tool of the Floridian, our conversation would

all be reported to the principal in the conspiracy, always granting there was any truth in our surmises.

"I suppose we shall get back from this excursion some time to-night," said Washburn, thoughtfully.

"I think we shall get back before dark," I replied.

"I don't say there is anything in what we were talking about last night, but there may be. If there is anything in it, Cornwood will tell Boomsby, after we return, what we have been talking about," replied the mate.

"Griffin will find a chance to tell Cornwood that you have been looking up the lodger, and Cornwood will carry it to Boomsby," I repeated.

"Just so. Now, we must fix things a little. Don't let Cornwood go on shore to-night."

"How can I keep him? He is hardly like the other members of the ship's company."

"You can need him for some purpose or other," suggested the mate, with a smile. "We must fight them with their own weapons."

"I was thinking to-day that I wanted to lay out the trip up the river with him. I bought a large pocket-map of Florida to-day, so that I could do it understandingly, though where we go will depend largely on the will and pleasure of our passengers. I can keep him for this purpose," I said.

"All right; and I will go ashore as soon as the mudhook touches the sand on our return," added Washburn. "There are several carriages coming down Market Wharf."

Both boats were sent to the wharf, and Washburn went off in one of them to superintend the seating of the party in them. All our extra stools and chairs had been arranged on the quarter-deck, forecastle, and hurricane-deck. There were enough of them for twice the number of persons expected, but no one could tell where the party would choose to sit, and there were enough to accommodate them in any one place they might select. Gopher was hard at work getting ready for the dinner, and Ben was expected to help him as soon as the party were on board.

I stood at the gangway, ready to receive the guests. Suddenly a band on the wharf struck up a lively air, and I found we were not to depend upon our own people for the music. The port boat came up first; and our boatmen were so much accustomed to this kind of duty, that they put the passengers on board without delay or inconvenience to them. There were six boat-loads, including the band of twelve pieces. The boats were hoisted up, and the anchor weighed by our steam windlass.

I had been introduced to all the excursionists as they came on board, and I had directed the waiters to show them to such parts of the vessel as they might select. When I went to the pilot-house, I found the seats all occupied by Owen and certain ladies he had invited there. As usual they were all the youngest and prettiest of the party. Cornwood stood at the wheel, as though he had chosen the duty he intended to perform. I had not procured a pilot, for I had been up and down the river five times, and I thought I knew enough about it to pilot the vessel myself. But I wished to test Cornwood's ability, and I told him to go ahead, giving him no further instructions.

He rang the bells correctly, and handled the wheel like an old salt. I was rather disappointed to find that he understood his business perfectly. His brag was not all brag. I had become considerably prejudiced against him by all that had been said; but I felt that I could do him justice. The scenery below the city is very pleasant, to say the least. The orange groves, and the dwellings, many of them occupied by people from the North, either as settlers or as winter residents, made a picturesque view from the river. Cornwood did not seem to be wholly occupied with the wheel, for he ex-

plained the nature of the country when he found that the party in the pilot-house were willing to listen to him. The herons, cranes, and many other birds were new to us.

"Mayport on the starboard hand," said the guide, when we had reached the mouth of the river. "The houses in that village are mostly occupied by fishermen, who catch shad and other fish in the winter and spring, and a good many southern people spend the summer here in cottages."

Cornwood directed the head of the steamer towards the other shore, and soon brought her to a pier at Pilot Town.

CHAPTER XIV.

THE EXCURSION TO FORT GEORGE ISLAND.

FORT GEORGE ISLAND is certainly a beautiful place for a summer or a winter residence, or for both. It is three and a half miles long, not including the sand-bar at the end, and a mile wide. On one side is the ocean, and on the other the Sisters' Channel, one of the inside passages by which steamers reach Savannah and Fernandina.

Owen told me the party would sail for Jacksonville at four o'clock, and dine as soon as the steamer was under way. All the excursionists landed, and leaving Washburn in charge, I went with them. Cornwood began to discharge his duties as guide as soon as we were on shore; but a considerable portion of the party were familiar with the island, and he did not have a large audience.

"This shell road," said he, as we left the wharf, "is the beginning of Edgewood Avenue, which is two miles and a half long. At the farther end of it is the hotel."

He continued his explanations to those who desired to hear them during the entire walk. I shall not repeat them. I found that he could give the name of every tree, plant, and flower we saw on the way. He had a name for every bird, bug, and worm; and I am ready to acknowledge that the extent, variety, and minuteness of his knowledge astonished me, partly because my prejudice led me to expect nothing of him. That those who brag most know least, did not appear to prove true in his case; for he did not have to "give it up" on any question asked him by the tourists of our party. He related the history of the island, and there was not a single particular concerning it on which he was not fully informed.

After crossing the beach on the shell road, we came to the forest of live-oaks, magnolias, palmettos, bay-trees, and others that one never sees in Maine or Michigan. I walked with Mr. Tiffany, and we agreed that this was one of the most delightful places we had visited. Pretty soon we were joined by Miss Margie and Miss Edith, who had become inseparable friends and companions. I learned that the Tiffanys had already accepted the invitation of Owen and Colonel Shepard to join the party for the up-river trip.

"Are there no snakes on this island, Captain Garningham?" asked Miss Margie, soon after we entered the wood.

"I dare say there are; but I don't know anything about it," I replied.

"Undoubtedly there are snakes on the island," interposed Mr. Cornwood; and I saw that he glanced at me, with a smile, as if in allusion to my experience on the evening before.

"I am very much afraid of snakes," said Miss Margie, looking timidly about her.

"But the snakes are more afraid of you than you are of them, Miss Tiffany," replied Cornwood. "Even the rattlesnake will keep out of your way, if he can."

"And I should surely keep out of his way. Are there rattlesnakes on this island?" asked the timid English maiden.

"I am sorry to say there are; but you might live on the island ten years and never see one. When you walk, you will naturally keep in the paths cut through the woods. Rattlesnakes will not visit these localities. But the rattlesnake is a very gentlemanly fellow; and if by any chance one should stray into a path, he would give you abundant warning before he did you any harm."

"I don't wish to see one," replied Miss Margie, with a shudder.

"You may be sure you will not meet any in the paths we take to-day," added the guide in a comforting tone. "But I would rather meet a dozen of them than step upon a copperhead or a water-moccasin. These will run away when they see you, if they can. The water-moccasin will not trouble you if you let him alone. The only danger from any Florida snake is in coming upon him when you don't see him."

"That is just what I am afraid of," said Miss Margie.

"This island has been settled so long that there can be but few snakes of the harmful kind left on it; for whites and blacks always kill them at sight."

After a very pleasant walk we reached the hotel, where a lunch was ready for us. To me the principal feature of this lunch was the broiled shad, the fish just taken from the water. It was the freshest and best I had ever eaten. The oysters in the chowder were small, but had been taken from the water that morning.

After the lunch the excursionists broke up into little parties, and each went where they were best pleased to go. I felt rather inclined to go where

Miss Margie went, for I had found she was as agreeable as she was pretty. Owen and the Shepards went to the Palmetto Avenue, which leads to an ancient homestead, affording a fair specimen of the planter's home in days gone by. Mr. Tiffany and his daughter wished to ascend Mount Cornelia, to which there was a carriage-road all the way from the hotel to the summit. This hill has an elevation of ninety-five feet, the highest point on the coast from Navesink and Cuba. Mr. Cornwood accompanied us, for, in spite of the warning Mr. Tiffany had given me, he was the guide's most attentive listener.

On the summit of the hill we found an observatory, which we occupied for a full hour. It commanded a fine view of the ocean, the inland channels, and the country beyond them. Before we left, Owen and the Shepards joined us.

"Have you seen any snakes, Margie?" asked Edith, when they were seated at the top of the observatory.

"I have not seen one; indeed, I have not thought of the snakes since Mr. Cornwood assured me we should see none," replied Miss Margie.

"I rather like snakes, and I hoped I should see some," added Miss Edith, very bravely.

"I think I could find some for you, Miss Edith," interposed Cornwood.

"No, I thank you. I don't care to go snaking. When I see one I wish to have it without any effort on my part," replied the beautiful girl.

"That is a nice way to get out of it," added Miss Margie. "I believe I should faint away if I came upon one, without any effort on my part."

"You will be likely to see some on your trip up the river, if you go on shore. The largest moccasin I ever saw I killed within the limits of the city of Jacksonville. It was on the way to Moncrief's Spring. Are you fond of alligators?" asked Mr. Cornwood, who also seemed to regard the English girl with much favor.

"I never saw one in my life," answered Miss Margie. "We don't have any such creatures in England. But I have seen pictures of the crocodile, which I dare say is the same thing."

"They are certainly the same sort of reptile, though a crocodile is not an alligator any more than an alligator is a crocodile. They differ in the shape of the head; the lower canine teeth of the crocodile fit into notches between the teeth of the upper jaw, while the alligator's lower teeth fit into cavities in the upper jaw. The alligator has a

broader and shorter head than the crocodile. The cayman, found in the East Indies and in tropical South America, is different in some respects from either. But we have both crocodiles and alligators in the more southern of the United States."

"I am sure I don't care whether they are crocodiles or alligators; they are ugly-looking beasts, and I don't want to see any of them," replied Miss Margie.

Mr. Cornwood had evidently "studied up" on alligators; and I was quite interested in his comparison of the different reptiles, for I had supposed they were all alike.

"You can't very well help seeing them when you go up the river, for some of the streams we shall doubtless explore are full of them," added the Floridian.

"Are you not afraid of them?"

"I don't think I ever saw anybody who was afraid of an alligator; they are too common here to alarm any person. But I am surprised that you did not see any alligators in Jacksonville, for thousands of little ones are kept for sale at the curiosity stores, and larger ones are kept for exhibition."

"I didn't happen to see any of them. Are they not dangerous?"

"We do not consider them so. In the earlier days of the State, when alligators eighteen feet in length were occasionally found, they may have attacked men when they caught them in the water. On land they are rather sluggish; but they are right smart in the water. The largest ones we are likely to see will not be over twelve feet long; and you will find ten little ones to one of this size. None of them will meddle even with a child; though if you should lie on the edge of a boat, with a hand or foot in the water, and went to sleep, they might snap at it."

"Ugh!" gasped the pretty maiden, with a shudder.

"You will be so much accustomed to them in a week after we start up the river, that you will not mind them more than you do the flies, and not half so much as you do the mosquitoes," added Mr. Cornwood.

"Are there many mosquitoes where we are going, Mr. Cornwood?" asked Mr. Tiffany.

"Not many at this season of the year, though we may fall into localities where they are very plenty. I shall take the liberty to suggest to Captain Garningham to have a quantity of mosquito netting on board, to provide against these pests,"

replied the Floridian, glancing from the Englishman to me.

"I will tell the steward to see that the beds and berths are properly protected," I added, glad to have the suggestion in season to save the passengers from annoyance.

Owen and Miss Edith had not paid any attention to Mr. Cornwood's lessons in natural history. Both of them had evidently voted the Floridian a bore. My cousin thought it was time to return to the hotel, where the band was playing for the benefit of the people.

All the party had collected there, and we soon started for the steamer. The band went ahead and played a march, and we kept step to the music. I found that Mr. Cornwood had again attached himself to Miss Margie, to the plain annoyance of that lady's father. I called him away, and dropping to the rear of the procession, I questioned him in regard to the trip up the river. He clearly understood my object in asking these questions at this time, and his answers were crusty, and his manner sulky. I persisted in torturing him till we reached the steamer, though I sacrificed my own pleasure in doing it for Miss Margie's benefit.

It was just four by the clock in the pilot-house when the Sylvania sailed on her return. The dinner was served in the cabin, and Gopher had done his best, as usual. At six Cornwood made a very good landing at the Market Wharf, and our guests departed immediately. I had to thank Washburn for doing one-half of the hand-shaking when they stepped ashore. Cornwood thought he would remain in the city, but I told him I wanted him on board. The mate did not go to the anchorage in the steamer, but stayed ashore.

CHAPTER XV.

A WAR OF WORDS.

WASHBURN had reported to me that, while I was dining with the passengers in the cabin, Griffin Leeds had gone into the pilot-house and had a short interview with Cornwood. Of course we used the octoroon as a waiter; and even Gopher took a hand at the same occupation, for he liked to hear what the party said about the dinner. Griffin must have taken the time while the waiters were clearing the tables for the last course, or while the gentlemen were amusing themselves with the American custom of making speeches. In either case, it was almost a sin for a waiter to leave his post.

Cornwood was sulky when I said I wanted him. Doubtless he had business on shore, as I had for him on board. I paid him five dollars a day and expenses; and I thought I had the best right to his services.

"Mr. Cornwood, I desire to have you map out

a practicable trip up the river for a steamer that draws nine feet of water, with her bunkers full of coal," I began, as I seated myself in my room.

The words were hardly out of my mouth when Hop Tossford came in with a message written on an old envelope, from Owen.

"Come to the Colonel's house at once.

OWEN."

"At once" meant immediately; and I was not a little annoyed by the summons, since it prevented me from carrying out my part of Washburn's little plan.

"I have the cruise all mapped out, Captain Garningham," replied Cornwood, while I was reading the message from my cousin.

He took from his breast-pocket a document, which he handed to me with a stiff bow. On opening it, I found it was a carefully prepared outline of the proposed cruise up the river, with detours in various bays and smaller streams.

"I will examine this at my leisure; for I am called to the house of Colonel Shepard by Mr. Garningham," I continued. "Very likely he desires to give me instructions in regard to the up-river trip. If he does, I wish to see you as

soon as I return; and I may not be gone more than an hour."

Cornwood made no reply; but I saw that he was biting his lip. My request was equivalent to an order to remain on board, and he was not exactly in position to set my wishes at defiance. I went ashore as soon as a boat could be dropped into the water, and hastened to the house of the Colonel. Owen said he was very glad to see me; and from the excitement of his manner, I judged that something was in the wind.

"To-morrow will be Saturday," said he, walking up and down the parlor where I had seated myself. "The same party we had to-day, including the Silver Cornet Band, will make a little run up the river, and stop for a while at Mrs. Mitchell's place, if it is practicable, with a dinner at four o'clock."

"It is not practicable —"

"It is not practicable!" exclaimed Owen, stopping in front of me.

"You did not hear me out, my dear charterer of the Sylvania," I replied, amused at the sudden check put upon his enthusiasm. "It is not practicable to run the steamer up to the pier at Mrs. Mitchell's place; but we can land the passengers

in the boats. Of course we can go up the river as far as Pilatka, and perhaps farther."

"We don't want to go up to — what's that place you mentioned? I have heard of it before, and it is forty or fifty miles up," added Owen, who had been too busy looking after Miss Edith to pay any attention to the geography of the State.

"The place is Pilatka; and it is seventy-five miles up."

"It would take all day to go to Pilatka; besides, I don't wish to spoil all the fun of the trip we are to take next week. There's a Chinese town or city, where Mrs. What's-her-name lives, about a dozen miles up," continued my cousin.

"A Chinese town? There are no Chinamen of any consequence in Florida."

"No, no! A town with a Chinese name, where the lady that wrote *Uncle Tom's Cabin* lives," interposed Owen impatiently.

"Mandarin," I added, after I had consulted a pamphlet guide I had picked up in one of the hotels. "It is fifteen miles from here."

"That's the place; and it is just the right distance!" exclaimed Owen. "We will go to Mandarin. By the way, you must have a lunch on board about twelve."

"All this is quite practicable."

"And why can't you take the steamer up to the pier at Mrs. Mitchell's place?" demanded my passenger.

"Because the bottom is too near the top of the water," I replied, laughing at the puzzled expression on my cousin's face.

"Couldn't you have the bottom put farther down for this occasion?" he inquired very seriously.

"Certainly, if you are willing to pay the bills and to wait long enough for the work to be done."

"I don't object to the bills, but we can't wait."

"I see that you have become quite an American traveller; you don't dispute any bills, and you can't wait."

"I can't wait to have a channel dredged out up to that pier, for very likely it would take all day to do it."

"It would take you Britishers three months to do it; Americans would do it in a week."

"I think my uncle, your father, is a Britisher. But I have no time to quarrel with you about that matter now; it will keep. We will be landed at the pier in boats, since you are not willing to accommodate us in any other manner."

"I will arrange the landing so that it shall be satisfactory," I added, thinking of a large barge I had seen at the boat-wharf.

"Then we are all right for to-morrow, are we, Alick?" asked my facetious cousin.

"All right. Whenever you tell me what you want, it shall be done."

"But just now you objected to taking your steamer up to that pier."

"I should have qualified the declaration—"

"Merciful Hotandsplosh!"

"Is that man your idol?"

"You take my breath away with your stunning long words!"

"I won't take your breath away, for you will want it all. I will do all you want when I can," I added.

"How much prettier that sounds than 'qualified the declaration.'"

"I see that I must write out all my speeches in words of not more than four letters, so as to bring them down to the dull brain of a Briton."

"The dull brain of a Briton is good."

"So your friend Hotandsplosh would say."

"I will introduce him to you some time."

"I don't want to know him; he is too slow for me."

"Come, come, Alick; we are quarrelling when we have business to do," said Owen, shaking his shoulders like a vexed child.

"You are quarrelling; I am not. You pick me up on my language as though you were my schoolmaster, and then complain that I am impeding the business of the conference."

"Cut it short! 'Impeding the business of the conference!' That jaw of yours will need to be patched up by a dentist, man!"

"Your jaw does all the mischief; and you are at it again, with your pedagogical —"

"Cut it short! What a word! A young man of high aims ought not to use such a word; and anybody else ought to be hung for it!"

"Still at it!"

"I wish to say something about the run up the river," continued Owen, who was very fond of criticising my language, and would even neglect important business to do it.

"Say it, then."

"Where do we go?"

"Wherever you say."

"Merciful Hotandsplosh! Am I to study up the geography of this State, so as to tell you where to go?" demanded my passenger.

"I will select a route, in consultation —"

"Oh dear!" gasped Owen, throwing himself at full length on a sofa, with his legs hanging over one end of it, as though he were in utter despair.

"I will talk with K-u-r-n-e-l, Colonel, S-h-e-p-a-r-d, Shepard, a-bout the r-o-u-t-e, route."

"Good! Shove it off on the Colonel!" exclaimed Owen. "I know what you say now; and I feel better."

"Perhaps you would like to know where it is possible for us to go," I continued, taking Cornwood's paper from my pocket as Owen sprang to his feet. "Here are some suggestions in regard to where we may go; it was made up by our guide;" and I handed him the paper, which he opened to the fold of the sheet, and turned it over and over.

"Merciful Grand Panjandrum!"

"Another friend of yours!"

"I got him out of an American book; and that accounts for it! Am I to read all this? *Tempus fugit.* Let it *fugit!* I should have to be buried in the blue sands of Florida if I read all this;" and he turned it over several times more.

"You would have to be buried in thought for a short time if you read it."

"Let me see, what did you call what's in this

paper? Suggestions, was it? If these are only suggestions, what must the real thing be! No, no, Alick! Go where you please; but don't ask me to read that paper. Only give us some shooting and fishing. Don't bother me with any more suggestions."

"You sent for me, and I came."

"I know you did. You are a young lamb, Alick. Now go and put it to the Colonel and Tiffany."

Presently Colonel Shepard's party came into the parlor. They had just arrived at the house, for they had stopped to see some alligators, and to buy Gulf beans and alligator's teeth, ornamented, for watch-charms and other wear. Miss Margie had seen an alligator six feet long, and thought he was very terrible. The baby reptiles she considered "very cunning little pets."

I proceeded at once to talk with Colonel Shepard about the up-river trip. He looked the paper over, but he and Mr. Tiffany were almost as much perplexed over it as Owen had been.

"We must go up the St. Johns to Enterprise, at least, and up the Ocklàwaha to Lake Griffin," said the Colonel.

"But the Sylvania draws too much water to go

far beyond Pilatka. After we get the anthracite coal out of the bunkers we shall carry up eight feet," I replied.

"Carry up eight feet! You have only two to carry, and an alligator may bite off one of them," shouted Owen, who it seemed had been listening to me, instead of giving attention to Miss Edith's charms, about which she was talking.

"Give heed to my charms, Mr. Garningham!" said Miss Edith.

"That's just what I have done since I first saw you!" exclaimed Owen.

I promised to consult the Floridian, and took my leave.

CHAPTER XVI.

GRIFFIN LEEDS AT A DISCOUNT.

I DID not expect that Mr. Cornwood would come on shore after what had passed between him and me, and I did not hurry on board when I left the house of Colonel Shepard. I passed from St. James Square down Laura Street, into Forsyth, on which the St. Johns House was situated. I passed the house several times, looking for Washburn, for I desired to know what success he had had in looking up Mr. Cobbington. I saw nothing of the mate, and I went into Bay Street, only a square from Forsyth.

I looked in every direction for Washburn, but I could not find him, and I was obliged to give up the search. I found my boat's crew on the wharf, watching some negroes opening oysters. It was done in a very clumsy manner, compared with the work of a Providence opener I had seen in New York; and my men were not at all satisfied with the manner it was done, though they had no interest in the job.

"Have you seen Mr. Washburn, Ben?" I asked, as we walked down the wharf.

"Yes, sir; we put him on board half an hour ago," replied the assistant engineer, who preferred to pull a boat rather than be idle.

"That was why I could not find him in the streets of Jacksonville," I added. "Has any one come off from the steamer since I came ashore?"

"No, sir, not a soul," answered Ben, decidedly.

I was glad to hear this, for it assured me that Cornwood had not left the steamer. The Sylvania was anchored on the other side of the main channel, which was near the line of wharves, but not more than a quarter of a mile distant. In a few minutes I was on board. The mate was at supper; and as I had dined within a couple of hours, I did not disturb him. I went to the steward, and gave him directions in regard to the lunch and dinner for the next day. Cornwood was smoking his cigar on the forecastle. I took the precaution to tell him that I wanted to see him in about half an hour or less, that he might not come into my room while I was engaged with Washburn.

I had done some thinking over the matter of eavesdroppers on board. I came to the conclusion that I would have nothing of the kind on

board. I had entire confidence in the two engineers, one of whom was the son of my guardian in Montomercy, and the other had sailed with me since the Sylvania had come into my possession. Moses Brickland, the chief, was lying on a sofa in the engine-room. I called Ben, and told them both enough to enable them to understand the situation, and that some of the later additions to our ship's company might be eavesdroppers. I asked them to keep an eye on the open windows of my state-room, and let me know if there were any skulking or loitering near them. Moses seated himself at one door of the engine-room, and Ben at the other. They were on deck, next to the rail, where they could see the windows of my room. There was a skylight in the hurricane-deck overhead, which was always open in this climate when it did not rain. I said nothing about this opening, because I could hear any person's footsteps on the deck over me.

Washburn came on deck soon after I had made this little arrangement. We went into our room by mutual consent, for one had something to say, and the other wanted to hear it. I explained to him what I had done to trap any listener who might want to know what we said. He replied that he had thought of doing something of the kind

himself; but he did not care to throw suspicion even upon Griffin Leeds by telling others the true story.

"Well, Washburn, did you find your man?" I asked.

"I am sorry to say I did not," he replied. "But I found where he boarded; and was told he was out, and would not return before nine or ten in the evening. I shall try again early in the morning, before he goes out for the day, for he takes only his breakfast at the house where he lodges."

"Where does he lodge?" I inquired.

Washburn gave me the street and number. It was not in the best part of the city by any means; and the mate inferred that he was not connected with the "first families." But he was none the worse for this. His landlord knew nothing about him, and had made him pay a week's board in advance.

We continued to talk about Cobbington for some time; but we were none the wiser when we got through than when we began. Suddenly we heard a tremendous scuffling overhead. It sounded as though two men or more were engaged in a severe conflict. After the first onslaught was over, the voices of two angry men were heard; and one of

them was that of Ben Bowman. Both Washburn and I rushed out of the state-room, he at one door, and I at the other.

When we were able to see the combatants, they were found to be Ben Bowman and Griffin Leeds. Ben had by this time proved that he was the more powerful and efficient of the two, for the octoroon had been pinned, as it were, to the deck, so that he was unable to do anything but kick. The assistant engineer had him by the throat, and the listener's attempts to speak resulted in nothing but a hoarse, choking sound, which it was painful to hear. Griffin's strength was rapidly failing him under the severe treatment of the engineer.

In another minute, all hands were climbing the ladder to the hurricane-deck. I noticed that Cornwood came up from the forecastle over the top of the pilot-house, which I had forbidden any one on board to do, at the beginning of the voyage, to prevent injury to the paint. I concluded that Griffin had come up in the same way. The occasion of the strife was plain enough to me as soon as I discovered who were engaged in it. I felt a little cheap after all the precautions I had taken to prevent being overheard.

"Let him up, Ben," I said, when I thought he had done enough.

The engineer at once relinquished his hold on the octoroon, and stood up. But Griffin did not appear to be able to get up yet. Both of the men were gasping for breath, and neither of them was able to speak for some minutes. As the waiter lay on the deck, I noticed that he wore no shoes, though he had on a pair of woollen socks. I looked about for his shoes. I had not seen Griffin before since I came on board.

"It is plain enough what this affair means," I said to the mate, while we were waiting for Ben to get his breath, and to be able to explain what the occasion of the conflict was.

"It don't need a very long-headed man to explain it," replied the mate. "Griffin has been at the old trick again."

"What is the old trick, Mr. Mate?" demanded Cornwood, rather offensively.

"If you are a sailor, you will call me by my name," replied Washburn, with dignity.

"Excuse me, Mr. Washburn; but I am somewhat interested in one of the parties to this row," added Cornwood, as he glanced at me. "I meant no offence, but I was a little excited by the circumstances. I brought this man on board, and I am anxious to have him do his duty faithfully,"

GRIFFIN LEEDS AT A DISCOUNT. Page 167.

answered Cornwood, with what seemed to me to be affected humility, for his eye still flashed, and he was evidently struggling to be calm. "Will you be kind enough to tell me, Mr. Washburn, what the old trick was?"

"Eavesdropping; listening to conversation not intended for him, which was going on in the captain's room," replied the mate, rather warmly.

"It is very strange to me, for I have known the boy for years, and I never heard any of his employers find fault with him before," added Cornwood. "I don't believe there is a better behaved boy in the State than Griffin Leeds. Excuse me for saying so much, which I should not have said if I had not brought the boy on board and recommended him to you."

I had no fault to find with his statement, as long as it was respectful. By this time Ben had got his wind again, and appeared to be ready to explain the reason for the conflict which had created such a sensation on board. All hands were on deck, gathered around the combatants. I was satisfied from the beginning that Ben had not begun the fight, for this was the first time I had ever known him to resort to violence, except when he had been ordered to do so by the mate in two instances,

both of them being the expulsion from the vessel of Captain Boomsby.

"Well, how was it, Mr. Bowman?" I asked, calling him by his last name with a handle to it, as I always did in the presence of the ship's company.

"A few minutes before I came upon the hurricane-deck, sir, I thought there was something like motion forward of the foremast. I stood up, but I could not see anything or anybody. But I could not get it out of my head that something was going on there. I spoke to Mr. Brickland about it, and he told me to go up and see what it was."

"Where was Mr. Brickland at that time?" demanded Cornwood.

"Mr. Bowman is answering my question, Mr. Cornwood, and you will not interfere," I interposed, for the Floridian appeared to have taken upon himself the duty of counsel for the octoroon.

"I beg your pardon, captain," replied Cornwood with a deferential bow.

"I went to the ladder on the starboard side, and mounted to this deck. As soon as I got up here, I saw Griffin lying flat on his face, with his right ear at the opening under the sash of the skylight. I slipped off my shoes, and crept as lightly as I could to the place where Griffin lay. I had no idea

of attacking him, and only intended to see what he was doing there. As soon as I was satisfied that he was listening to the conversation between you and Mr. Washburn, which I could hear, though I could not tell what you said, I just touched him on the shoulder. I meant to beckon him to come away from the skylight, but he did not give me time to do that. He sprang to his feet, and we all know he is a spry fellow, and pitched into me as though I had tried to murder him."

"You lie!" yelled the octoroon, with a savage oath. "You did try to murder me!"

Griffin leaped from his recumbent position, and, foaming with rage, drew a bowie-knife from his pocket, the long blade of which he threw open with a jerk of his hand. With the knife gleaming in the air, he rushed upon Ben Bowman. He would surely have plunged the blade into his intended victim, if Buck Lingley had not darted upon him as soon as he saw the knife. The deck-hand was the stoutest person on board, and he bore the octoroon to the deck in an instant, and wrenched the knife from his grasp.

"Hold on to him a moment, Buck!" I called to him. "Get some line, and tie him hand and foot!"

Hop Tossford sprang to obey my order. He

seized the end of a heave-line, and while Buck drew the arms of the waiter behind him, he secured them in this position with the assistance of the mate. This line was only for temporary use; and Hop soon brought a handful of pieces of whale-line from the store-room, and the prisoner was carefully secured. The octoroon struggled to escape, but the mate and Buck held him tight.

"Drop the starboard boat into the water," I continued. "Mr. Washburn, you will deliver him to the police of the city."

CHAPTER XVII.

POOR GRIFF AND HIS COUNSEL.

"SURELY, Captain Garningham, you cannot mean to hand the man over to the police for getting into a common brawl," said Cornwood, when I had given my order.

"We don't allow brawls on board this steamer. This is the first one that ever occurred on the decks of this vessel," I replied, debating in my own mind whether or not I should discharge the Floridian, who seemed to be the real culprit, though of course I could not prove that he was the octoroon's principal in the business of eavesdropping.

"But this was simply a misunderstanding between the men; and both of them will be as good friends as ever before morning," pleaded Cornwood. "Mr. Bowman intended to do the boy no harm when he seized hold of him; and poor Griff thought he intended to kill him."

"That's just what I thought," replied the octoroon, who had entirely cooled off.

"But I didn't seize hold of him, as the gentleman says," interposed Ben Bowman. "I did not lay the weight of one hand on him; I only just touched him, as I said before; and I don't want anybody to say I seized hold of him. I didn't do anything of the sort."

"I lay down there and went to sleep, for I have had to work hard to-day. I lay in a hard position, and I suppose it was that which made me dream that somebody had struck me on the head, and was trying to murder me," Griffin explained, in the most humble tones. "I woke, and seeing a man bending over me, I thought the dream was a reality."

"Were you dreaming when you drew the knife, at least five minutes after you were pinned to the deck by Mr. Bowman?" I asked, sternly. "Your story is too thin."

"I was mad, crazy with excitement; I didn't know what I was doing," pleaded "poor Griff." "Don't give me over to the police! I never was before a court for anything in all my life! Forgive me this time, dear Captain!"

I was afraid I might do so if he talked to me long in this strain.

"Take him down to the boat! Obey your

order, Mr. Washburn!" I said, with energy. "Take the knife with you, and deliver it to the police."

"Captain Garningham, I beg you to consider that you are doing a very great injustice to this boy, who, I am certain, intended no harm to anybody," interposed Cornwood again.

"I don't believe in the harmless intentions of a man who can draw a bowie-knife on another," I replied; and I had no more doubt of the octoroon's guilt than I had of my own existence.

"I am very sorry indeed that you should take so serious a view of what has proved a harmless affray," added Cornwood. "If you deliver him over to the police, which, as the captain of the vessel, you have a right to do, I suppose his case will be called to-morrow forenoon. I must ask leave of absence to act as his counsel."

I supposed this was said to remind me of the excursion of the next day, the news of which had been circulated from the steward's department. But the excursion made no difference to me; I felt that I had a duty to perform, and I was resolved to perform it, even if the excursion had to be postponed to another day. Griffin Leeds was carried into the boat, and the mate departed for the city with him.

"Now, Mr. Cornwood, I should like to see you in regard to the up-river trip," I said, as soon as the boat had left the steamer. "We leave on Monday."

"If this affair which has just occurred will permit us to do so," added the Floridian, rather stiffly.

"That need not detain us a single day," I replied, decidedly. "We have twice as many hands as we need for this river navigation; and we can spare all that may be needed as witnesses."

"But I have to remain to defend poor Griff, who, I am persuaded, is a victim of circumstances," said Cornwood, who evidently intended to make it plain I was to reap the bitter fruits of my folly in the dissatisfaction of my passengers, as they might not be inclined to stay after they had made up their minds to go.

"Then I shall be obliged to make the trip with a river pilot," I added promptly, for I did not intend that the Floridian should get ahead of me in this business.

The guide bit his lips, as though he did not quite like the situation. He knew enough of Owen Garningham to understand that, after he had made up his mind to start on the up-river trip

on Monday, he would be determined to go in the face of all obstacles.

"I can hardly desert the poor fellow in his trouble," sighed Mr. Cornwood.

"That is a question you must decide for yourself," I replied, with as much indifference as I could assume. "It seems to me you make a light matter of a serious assault, and your sympathy is all with the man who committed it. You call him 'poor Griff,' as though he were a persecuted victim, instead of one who had raised his hand with a knife in it against one of the ship's company."

"I have a great regard for that boy, for he saved my life once when I fell overboard and was injured so that I could not swim, and there were three large sharks near the vessel. I should be inhuman to desert him, even if he were as guilty as you seem to think he is," continued the guide; but I was inclined to believe that his explanation was more than half an invention.

"In what court will this man be brought up?" I asked.

"He will be brought before the mayor, as magistrate; and if he considers it a simple assault, he will fine the boy, or send him to prison;

if an assault with intent to kill, he will bind him over to a higher court for trial."

"In either case, the matter is likely to be disposed of in season for the excursion to-morrow forenoon. If he is bound over, we can appear, such of us as are required as witnesses, at the proper time," I replied, as off-hand as though I had been a lawyer all my days. "Now we will leave that question, and turn to others of more importance."

"It may be a matter of light importance to have the boy sent off to work with a prison-gang for two or three years, but I don't so regard it," growled Cornwood.

"When a man draws a knife on another, he needs the attention of the courts. You seem to be so accustomed to that sort of thing that you mind nothing about it. Where I come from we don't use knives with that sort of freedom."

"If it were not clearly a misunderstanding on the part of poor Griff, I wouldn't say anything more about it."

"It was no misunderstanding when Griffin leaped to his feet, at least five minutes after the struggle with the engineer, and rushed upon him with a knife. But we will say nothing more about it,

anyhow. Colonel Shepard says the party wish to go up the river as far as Sanford and Enterprise, and up the Ocklawaha to Lake Griffin."

"As it seems to be very uncertain whether I go with you or not, I prefer to say nothing about the trip for the present," replied the Floridian, sulkily.

"Very well; then you will consider your engagement at an end," I added, without an instant's hesitation; and already I began to feel some relief at the idea of getting rid of a suspicious person.

My sudden decision did not seem to suit the guide any better than my position in regard to Griffin Leeds. I had risen from my chair at the desk, as though the business was finished, when I gave my decision; and by this time he could believe that I meant all I said.

"There will be time enough to settle this business after the court has met to-morrow morning," said he, with an evident intention of "backingdown."

"But my passengers wish to know at once what the plan is, and I desire to procure a pilot for the excursion to-morrow," I replied.

"I will go with you on the excursion, whether I go up the river or not."

"No, you will not. I have no time to fool

with you. I shall engage a pilot to-night for the up-river trip, if you cannot go with me," I added, indignantly.

"I think I can go with you; in other words, I will go with you. It is not possible to go up the Ocklawaha in this steamer," said Cornwood, suddenly changing front, somewhat to my regret. "The masts and yards would be carried away by the trees that overhang the stream, and she draws too much water for the Ocklawaha or the upper St. Johns."

"That matter is settled, then, and I will report to Colonel Shepard. Will you explain to me where we can go in this steamer."

The guide became as communicative as ever in a little while, and seemed to have forgotten the little difference which had threatened a serious rupture in our relations. He was as pleasant as though no cloud had passed between us. We discussed the up-river trip, and I made memoranda of what he said till ten o'clock, when we retired. If what he said about his obligations to Griffin Leeds was true, I could not blame him for wishing to stand by the waiter. But a fair statement of his relations, without any of the bullying he had attempted, would have accomplished his wishes better.

When I turned out in the morning, I found the mate had gone ashore. At half-past eight, as requested by the chief of police through Washburn, Ben Bowman and I went on shore to attend the mayor's court. I had started in season to call on Colonel Shepard, to whom I related all the events of the preceding evening, including my interview with the Floridian. The Colonel decided to ask his friend, Colonel Ives, a lawyer of influence, and a Floridian, to attend court with me.

Washburn was on hand in season, and the mayor listened to the testimony. Cornwood had his opportunity to badger the witnesses, and he made the most of it. The magistrate, in spite of the eloquence of the counsel for the defence, chose to regard the offence as a serious assault, and bound the prisoner over for his appearance at a higher court, three weeks hence. This was about the time we expected to be absent up the river, and I saw that the Colonel's friend had managed the case well without saying a word out loud. Cornwood found bail for the culprit, and he was released.

"I suppose he can return to his duties on board of the steamer," said the waiter's counsel.

"No, sir; I would not tolerate such a man on board any more than I would a rattlesnake," I replied.

I paid him his wages, and something more, on the spot; and when he left the court, his look and his manner indicated that he was more intent upon revenge than anything else. It was quarter of ten when the case was thus settled for the present, and we hastened to the wharf, and on board. I had engaged a large barge at the boat-wharf to put the passengers on board, and they were all taken off at one load.

We had the anchor up by the time they were alongside, and it was only a few minutes after ten when I rang the bell to go ahead.

CHAPTER XVIII.

THE EXCURSION TO MANDARIN.

THE band struck up a lively air as the boat started; and nothing could be more exhilarating than the strains of the music, in the soft sunshine and mild, sweet air of that semi-tropical region. It was March; but the air was like summer. As soon as we had passed the first bend, the St. Johns appeared more like a far-reaching lake than a stream. The river is from one to six miles wide below Pilatka. The shores are never elevated, for there is not a bluff upon it that is more than thirty feet high, while generally the land is only a few feet above the level of the water. The highest elevation near the river hardly exceeds sixty feet.

The country is almost wholly covered with woods, as seen from the river. With the exception of a few villages, hardly a house can be seen from the passing steamer. One seems to be nearly alone with nature while voyaging on this broad

tide. The trees are pines and magnolias, and now and then one sees a patch covered with jasmine, the vine of which climbs the trees and shrubs, and blossoms there. There are plenty of flowers, even in the early spring. Compared with Maine or Michigan, where I had spent most of my life, it was fairy-land in March.

"What are you doing here, Cornwood?" asked Colonel Ives, as he entered the pilot-house, soon after we were under way.

The party was somewhat larger than it had been the day before, and both the Mayor and Colonel Ives, with their families, were on board.

"I am the pilot of this steamer for the present," replied Cornwood; and I thought he felt a little "cut" by the question.

"Isn't this a little derogatory to the profession?" laughed the Colonel.

"I don't practise at the bar much, as you are aware: my health does not admit of the confinement," the pilot explained.

"That is often the case with practitioners who don't have much to do in their profession."

"I have always had all I could do at the bar; but the open air and an active life agree best with me."

"It does with everybody who is short of cases."

"But he is a good pilot down the river, and I have no doubt he is just as good up the river, Colonel Ives," I interposed. "His knowledge of has native State surprises us all."

"I was only bantering him, captain," replied the passenger. "I think he is a very good lawyer too, though he did not have a good case this morning."

"When it comes to trial, I will show you that it is a better case than you think it is," replied Cornwood, with more spirit than he had before exhibited. "'Prisoners hang that hungry jurymen may dine,' and you and the Mayor were in a hurry to finish the case, so that you could join this excursion."

"I was not in the case," added the Colonel.

"But you prompted the magistrate to end it as soon as possible."

"What was the use of talking all day over a matter that was as plain as day? The rascal would have killed the engineer, if the deck-hands hadn't interfered," replied Colonel Ives. "The case might have been finished in ten minutes, as well as in three-quarters of an hour."

I was willing the lawyers should fight it out between themselves, and I left the pilot-house,

which Owen and his ladies had not yet invaded. I saw Washburn on the top-gallant forecastle, looking at the scenery of the river, and I joined him in this retired place. I had not yet had an opportunity to ask him if he had found Cobbington, and I went to the forecastle for this purpose.

"I found him," replied the mate, in a disgusted tone. "But I might as well not have found him."

"Why so?" I inquired, rather amused by the manner of my friend.

"Since I came on board, I have found out something more than I knew before. Last evening, while you were ashore, Cornwood called a boat that was passing, and sent a letter ashore by the boatman," continued Washburn, as much dissatisfied as though he had been personally injured. "Of course that note went to Captain Boomsby."

"How do you know Cornwood sent a letter on shore last night?"

"Buck," called the mate to the deck-hand who was on duty forward.

"On deck, sir," replied Buck, touching his cap to the mate.

"You told me this morning, when you set me ashore, that the pilot sent a letter to the city last night by a boat he hailed."

"Yes, sir; three or four of us were on deck at the time, if there is any doubt about it," replied the deck-hand.

"No doubt at all about it. Did you notice the boatman that took the letter?"

"It was a blacky I have seen a dozen times about the steamer and on the wharf, looking for jobs for that boat-yard," replied Buck. "He was in the barge that brought off the passengers to-day."

"All right, Buck;" and the deck-hand retired. "After I heard about this letter, I didn't expect anything of Cobbington, if I found him."

"Did you find him?"

"I did; he was not out of his bed when I called for him. He told me he had two water moccasins, and one of them had got away while he had a room at Captain Boomsby's. He did not know what became of him. He had looked all about the house without being able to find him."

"Did he tell you what became of the other?"

"I asked him that question, and he told me he had him still. I asked him to let me see him, but he refused in spite of all I could say to induce him to show him. He said the snake was nailed up in a box, with only some holes bored in it to admit the air; and he could not show the snake without

taking off the cover of the box. The moccasin was a dangerous fellow, and he didn't want to run any risks with him. He had left his last boarding-place because they killed a rattlesnake belonging to him. I asked him to show me the box, but he wouldn't even do that, and said it was all nonsense to show the box."

"You made up your mind that he had no moccasin?" I added.

"No more than I had. On my way down from the house I met his landlord, coming home from the market. He asked me if I had found Cobbington. I told him I had, and then informed him his lodger kept a live moccasin snake in his room. He was greatly astonished at what I told him, and declared that he wouldn't have a moccasin in his house for all the money there was in Jacksonville; the snake might get loose, and bite his wife or one of his children. He intimated that he should hasten home and turn Cobbington out of his house: he would not have any man under his roof who would endanger the lives of his wife and children."

"That was bad for Cobbington," I replied, with a smile.

"I told the landlord what his lodger said, that he had the moccasin nailed up in a box. He didn't

care how he kept him: he would not have such a fellow about his house. I added that I did not believe Cobbington had any such snake in his room, though he insisted that he had. Then he either had a moccasin, or he lied about it, and in either case he didn't want the fellow in his house. I came to the conclusion that the landlord wanted to turn out his lodger, and only wished for a reasonable excuse for getting rid of him. I left him; and I suppose Cobbington has been turned out by this time. I shouldn't want a poisonous snake in my house."

"Nor a man who would lie without a reasonable excuse," I added.

The steamer went along at her usual speed. I returned to the pilot-house, where by this time Owen had installed all the young ladies he could get into it. They were all full of fun and jollity, and were enjoying the excursion to the utmost. As it seemed to me that they ought to do so, I found no occasion to complain. I could not help suspecting that the pilot might be guilty of some treachery, after the events of the morning, and I deemed it advisable to have a close watch upon him. But he kept the steamer in the middle of the river, where I had been informed there were

no shoals; and certainly no rocks, for not one could be found in this part of the state, even big enough to stone a stray dog.

"Mulberry Grove on the right," said Cornwood, who did not neglect his duties as guide, while he attended to those of pilot.

We could see little besides a long pier, though there was a glimpse to be obtained of a house through the vista of trees.

Twenty minutes later we ran up to the pier at Mandarin, where the pilot made as handsome a landing as I ever saw in my life. It was half-past eleven when we had secured the steamer to the wharf. The band played some popular airs, and in a few minutes I judged that we had the entire population of the village on the wharf. It was a lively time for Mandarin, which is a remarkably quiet place. I believe I saw something like a store there, though I am not quite sure. About all the houses are on the bank of the river, and were reached by a long, narrow foot-bridge, built over the lagoon. From the main bridge, cross bridges extended to each house.

At twelve the lunch was ready, and the excursionists went down into the cabin to attend to it, while the band on the hurricane-deck continued to

play. An oyster chowder and baked shad were the principal substantials of the lunch; and while they were served, Gopher was the greatest man on board. As soon as the lunch was disposed of, and the cook had been sufficiently complimented, the party went on shore. Cornwood led the way over the long foot-bridge.

"There is an alligator in the wild state," I said to Miss Margie, as I was walking with her and her father.

"I don't see anything," she replied.

"Don't you see that splashing in the water, with something black in the midst of it? That is an alligator, the first one I ever saw," I added.

It looked like a stick of wood. A little farther along we saw one on a log. He was not more than three feet long. He attracted the attention of the party, who had never seen one in his native element before; but we expected to see larger ones in the course of a week or two. Mrs. Stowe's cottage was one of the first we came to. It was a one-story, wooden house, with no pretensions to elegance. An immense live-oak grew near it, and covered the cottage with its branches. Around it was an orange grove, on the trees of which many oranges still remained. The distinguished lady was not at home, and we did not see her.

We walked to the end of the bridge, looking at the pretty dwellings on the shore, and then went upon the land, where we had quite a ramble. But an hour enabled us to see all there was of the place, and we embarked for the return. Before five o'clock we were in sight of Jacksonville. The pilot ran the boat as near the shore as it was safe to go, and the barge I had engaged to be present transported the party to the shore. Mrs. Mitchell's house looked very pleasant from the outside; but we were principally interested in the garden and orange grove. It was said that over five thousand oranges had been gathered from one of the trees we saw. We examined a great variety of semi-tropical trees and shrubs, such as lemon, banana, grape-fruit, and others I cannot remember.

The party dined on the river, and landed at the market at six.

CHAPTER XIX.

THE ADVENTURES OF AN INVALID.

MR. CORNWOOD had been very polite and pliable all day, and his skill as a pilot won my commendation. When he expressed a desire to remain on shore, at the wharf, I did not object. As soon as the anchor was let go, all hands were piped to supper; but I was in no condition to take another meal that day, after the dinner with the excursionists, from which I had risen an hour before. I was glad to be alone in my state-room, after the excitement of the day. In spite of what had transpired in the morning, and in spite of the evidence obtained by Washburn in regard to the snake, I could not help wondering if, after all, the pilot was not innocent of any evil intentions.

It seemed to me that a man of his education, having a profession, could not take part in any small conspiracy, such as Captain Boomsby would be likely to get up. If either Cornwood or Griffin Leeds, his agent, intended to do me any harm, it

seemed to me they had had abundant opportunity to do it already. The pilot might have wrecked the vessel, and the waiter might have poisoned the food I ate. I resolved to be very careful how I charged Cornwood with any evil, unless it was capable of being proved.

"I should like to go on shore, Alick, if you have nothing better for me to do," said Washburn, coming into my room when he had finished his supper.

"I have nothing for you to do," I replied. "What's up now?"

"I have some curiosity to know what has become of Cobbington; and I think I shall call upon his landlord," replied the mate, laughing.

"I will go with you, if you have no objection," I added.

"I should be glad of your company," said he, leading the way to the gangway. "Hold on a minute, captain," he added, when I began to order my boat. "There is the boatman that carried off Cornwood's letter. He is looking for a job: suppose we give him one?"

I did not object, and the mate hailed the boatman. We seated ourselves in his boat, and he pulled for the shore. Our uniforms gave us great

distinction among the colored people. Very likely some of them thought we were United States naval officers: at any rate, they all treated us with "distinguished consideration."

"What's your name, boatman?" asked Washburn.

"Moses Dripple," replied the man.

"Well, Moses Dripple, were you alongside our steamer last evening?" continued the mate.

"Yes, sar; made a quarter taking a letter ashore," answered Moses, showing teeth enough for a full-grown alligator.

"Put it in the post-office, did you?" inquired Washburn, indifferently, as he looked behind him at the steamer.

"No, sar; didn't put it into the post-office; car'ed it to a saloon-keeper, and he gave me a drink of apple-jack, as soon as he had read it, for bringin' de letter."

"Is it possible that you drink apple-jack?" asked the mate, with some observations on the folly of drinking liquor.

"Drink it when I git it, sar."

"Where did you get your apple-jack?"

"At de saloon; where else would I get it, sar?"

"I suppose it made you so boozy you don't

know where the saloon was," added the mate, keeping up his indifference, as though his talk was mere banter.

"It was de new saloon, sar; not boozy at all, sar; Captain Boomsby keeps dat saloon. Mighty mean man, Captain Boomsby. As soon as he done read de letter, he put on his coat, and left de saloon."

That was all that Washburn cared to know—that the letter from Cornwood had gone to Captain Boomsby; and he bestowed a look of triumph upon me. I paid the boatman a quarter, and we walked up to Bay Street. We had hardly turned the corner before we came plump upon a man who seemed to be very anxious to meet my friend and companion. I had never seen him before.

"Mr. Cobbington, this is Captain Garningham, of the steamer Sylvania," said Washburn, chuckling.

"How do you do, Mr. Cobbington," I replied.

"How are you, captain: I'm glad to see both of you," replied Cobbington. "One of you has got me into a bad scrape, for this morning, Gavett, the man I boarded with, turned me out of his house because I had a moccasin snake in a box in my room."

"Rough on you, was he?" added the mate.

"Mighty rough! I have been looking for another room all day, and I can't get one. I've got to sleep out-doors to-night," replied Cobbington, with a very long face.

"You shouldn't keep poisonous snakes in your room," I added.

"He never would have known it if this man hadn't told him," said the snake-man, turning to the mate. "I don't know your name, but you got me into a very bad scrape for an invalid; and that's the reason why I am down in Florida, instead of at home where I could earn a decent living," whined Cobbington. "I shall die in a week, if I have to sleep out in the night-air: and I don't know of even a shed to get under."

"It was no more than right to tell a man you had a poisonous reptile in his house," added Washburn. "The snake might have got out, and bitten his wife and children."

"Early this morning I paid Gavett the last dollar I had for the rent of the room; and I haven't had a mouthful to eat since I had my breakfast. How long can an invalid live, sleeping out-doors, with nothing to eat?" added Cobbington.

I saw the tears roll down the thin cheeks of the man, and my sympathies were excited. I saw it was the same with Washburn.

"I have been in to see Captain Boomsby; I had a room in his house for a while, and always paid for it. He wouldn't let me sleep on the floor in one of his empty chambers, nor give me anything to eat," continued the poor wretch.

"You shall have something to eat, and a place to sleep," I said.

We went over the way to Lyman's restaurant with him, and I ordered a sirloin steak and fried potatoes for him, with other food. When it came, he devoured it like a starving man. Whatever other lies he had told, it was the truth that he was very hungry.

"That is the best meal I have eaten since I came into Florida," said he with emphasis, when he had drained his coffee-cup. "Gentlemen, I am more than grateful to you. I have struggled hard to keep my soul and body together, and I've done it so far, though there isn't much left of my body. I could live here, if I could earn enough to live on. You have been kind to me; and now I'm going to tell you something: I have no moccasin-snake, and I never had one, say nothing of two. I know I'm a liar; but I told that lie for a dollar Boomsby gave me for telling it, so that I need not be turned out of my room. If I had that Judas dollar, I

would send it back to Boomsby, and die with a clean conscience."

"It never pays to do wrong," I added, deeply moved by the invalid's story.

"I told Gavett I had no snake; but he turned me out, all the same. I showed him everything I had; and he could find no box for the snake: only a lot of baby alligators, that won't hurt anybody. I make a quarter now and then by selling them to the children at the hotels. I had to sell my gun I used to shoot alligators with for their teeth; my best clothes are pawned; and my trunk is about as empty as my stomach was half an hour ago. I have got about to the end of my rope; and I don't know what will become of me."

"We will see what we can do for you, Mr. Cobbington," I added. "What was your business at home?"

"I have done almost everything. I was brought up on a farm, and had a pretty good education. My father and mother both died, and my brother followed them, all in consumption. I went to teaching school, for we lost the farm, and I had to take care of myself before I was twenty. My health gave out, and I tried to work on a farm, but I wasn't strong enough. Then I went to tending

table at a summer hotel, and saved about a hundred dollars. A man told me I should get well if I came to Florida. I thought I could make my living here, and I came. I brought a gun with me, and went into the woods. I shot deer, wild turkeys, and alligators. I sold the game and the teeth, and got along pretty well in the winter. Last summer I spent all the money I had left in coming down here. My health was pretty good then. I sold my gun for sixty dollars, half what it was worth, and did jobbing enough to keep me alive. I worked as a waiter on a steamer, in place of a sick man, for a month, and left the boat at Silver Spring, where the man took his place. I hired a gun, and tried to get a living by shooting again; but I couldn't find a market for the game. I had to give it up.

"I had a lot of alligators' teeth, a rattlesnake, which a gentleman on a steamer offered to give me ten dollars for in Jacksonville, and I worked my way down here. I sold the teeth; but the man that wanted the rattlesnake was at St. Augustine, and I had to wait till he came back, on his way north. Boomsby's wife turned me out when she found she didn't like me, and they killed the snake at the St. Johns. I couldn't stay there any longer

now I had lost the ten dollars for the snake. My money was all gone; but I picked up a little selling babies."

"Selling babies!" exclaimed Washburn.

"Baby alligators, I mean," added Cobbington, with a languid smile. "My health was good while I was in the woods; I don't have any cough now, but I've been running down lately."

Poor fellow! My heart was touched for him. It was hard to grub for a bare subsistence, with the immediate prospect of dying in the street. Washburn looked expressively at me, and I nodded to him. We rose from the table, and told Cobbington to come with us. We took him to a clothing-house, fitted him out with a new suit, yacht-club style, with a white canvas cap like my own, except the gold band. We supplied him with under-clothing, and with everything he needed, even to handkerchiefs, socks, and shoes. Having obtained these, one-half of the cost of which Washburn insisted upon paying, we next visited a bath-house, where the invalid "washed and was clean." He then clothed himself in the new clothes, and came out of the bath-room looking like another person.

We went to the wharf, where we obtained a boat,

and in a few minutes we were on board. I formally engaged the man to take the place of Griffin Leeds, as the waiter at the mess in the forward cabin. He had served in this capacity in an hotel, and on steamers on the St. Johns and Ocklawaha rivers. I gave him a berth in the forward cabin. I think he was happy when he turned into it.

On Sunday I went to church in St. James Square, and called upon Owen as I came out. Colonel Shepard informed me that he had chartered a steamer that plied on the Ocklawaha at times, to take us anywhere that a steamer could go. She was small, but large enough for our party.

I dined with the family and their guests, and went on board in the afternoon. The steward was entirely satisfied with the manner in which Cobbington had discharged his duties, and the invalid was the happiest man I had seen in the Land of Flowers.

CHAPTER XX.

DIFFICULTIES IN THE WAY OF DEPARTURE.

EXCEPT in Jacksonville, there was no market on the St. Johns River; and Mr. Peeks had been not a little disturbed in relation to the culinary department of the Sylvania. He could not go on shore at the villages on the river, and buy what he wanted; but with several steamers every day going up to Pilatka, and several every week going up the Ocklawaha, I assured him he would have no difficulty about feeding his passengers. He made an arrangement with the keeper of the stall where he had obtained his best meats to forward to him, on his order, such supplies as would be needed, including ice, which was a prime necessity, not so much to preserve the meats as to cool the water, and put various articles in condition for the table.

In spite of the general belief in the dampness of a Florida atmosphere, I learned that meats would keep longer than in Michigan. There are no cellars

in Florida, and the dwelling-houses are usually set on posts planted in the ground. Meats are hung up in a shady place, where they will keep for a week or more; and even then they are dried up, instead of being tainted or putrefied. The steward had filled the ice-house with the best beef, mutton, and poultry he could find, most of which came from New York, though some of the Southern markets are supplied with beef from Tennessee and Kentucky. Most of the cattle of Florida range through the woods and pick up their living, so that they are not properly fatted for the market, and look like "Pharaoh's lean kine."

No particular hour had been fixed upon for starting on the up-river trip, but the passengers came on board at ten in the forenoon. At this time steam was up in the boilers, and everything ready for an immediate departure. But Mr. Cornwood had not put in an appearance. I had not seen him since he went on shore at the wharf, on Saturday evening. I was not much annoyed, for I knew where I could get a pilot at fifteen minutes' notice.

Chloe, Griffin Leeds's wife, had come off with the ladies. She remained perfectly neutral, though she knew all about the troubles with her husband.

I looked at her with some interest when she came on deck; but she seemed to be as cheerful and pleasant as ever. If she had said anything to the ladies about Griffin, nothing had come to me. As her husband was not to be on board, I told the steward to give her one of the after-berths in the cabin. She was so polite, attentive, and kind, so wholly devoted to her duties, that the ladies had become very much attached to her, treating her more like a friend than a servant.

Chloe was not more than twenty-two years old. She had been a stewardess on a Charleston steamer, running up to Pilatka, at the time of her marriage to Griffin Leeds, who was second waiter in the same boat. She was entirely familiar with her duties, and when they were reduced to attendance upon three ladies, she discharged them with the most punctilious care.

"What are we waiting for, Alick?" asked Washburn, as I seated myself in the pilot-house when all the preparations for our departure were completed, and I could think of nothing more to be done, though I had left the port boat in the water in case it became necessary to go on shore for a pilot.

"Cornwood has not come off yet," I replied.

"Where is he?"

"I have no idea."

"Does he intend to play us a trick, and leave us in the lurch, now that we are all ready for a start?" asked the mate, with some anxiety on his face.

"I don't know, and I don't much care," I replied. "I don't know that I ought to blame him much, since no fixed hour was named for starting."

"He ought to be on board like the rest of us, so that whenever his services are required he may be ready to do his work," added Washburn, impatiently. "You say you don't much care whether or not he intends to play us a trick and leave us in the lurch. How are you to get on without a pilot?"

"I can have one on board in half an hour at the most. There are plenty of them, and I find they are glad to serve in such a nobby craft as the Sylvania, where they have easy work and the best of grub," I replied.

"There comes a boat. I see the Panama hat and light clothes in it," added Washburn, evidently relieved, for he was impatient for the voyage to begin.

In a minute more the pilot was on the deck of the steamer.

"I hope I have not delayed you," said he, when he saw that we were all ready to leave.

"Not long," I replied, wishing to make things as pleasant as possible with him for the trip of three weeks.

"I did not know at what hour you intended to leave, or I should have been on board before," pleaded Cornwood. "I have been very busy with some legal business this morning."

"If you are all ready, we will be off at once," I continued.

I hastened to the pilot-house, expecting him to follow me; but instead of doing so, he passed through the engine-room, and disappeared on the other side of the vessel. I concluded he had gone below for another coat he wore when at the wheel. I went into the pilot-house, thinking he would appear in a moment. The anchor was hove up to a short stay; but the wind was blowing quite fresh from the south-west, and I did not care to get under way in his absence from the wheel. I waited ten minutes; and then my patience began to give out. I left the pilot-house, with the intention of sending below for the pilot, when I was informed that a boat had just come alongside.

It contained Captain Boomsby and Griffin Leeds.

Though I had tried to make myself proof against harboring any suspicions, I thought the

long delay of Cornwood was explained. He had been very busy with legal business that morning. Did it relate to the affairs of Griffin Leeds and my ancient enemy?

"Allow no one to come on board," I said to the mate, who had told me of the coming of the boat, and who were in it.

I went aft. The gangway steps had been taken in-board, and stowed away after Cornwood came. Captain Boomsby was rather more than half full of whiskey. I found there was a third person in the boat, who proved to be an officer. He had come to attach the steamer on the suit of Captain Boomsby, to obtain possession of her on his old claim, and to trustee Owen Garningham for any money that might be due to me. I allowed the officer to come on deck. He was a very gentlemanly man, and had applied to Colonel Ives when the writ was given to him. The colonel had filled out a bond as surety for the defendant, to be signed by Colonel Shepard; and that gentleman at once put his autograph on the document.

The officer was entirely satisfied, and was about to take his departure when Cornwood appeared; but he offered no objection, and the writ had not come from his office. Captain Boomsby was in a

violent passion when he learned that the steamer was to be allowed to proceed on her voyage up the river. He swore at the officer, and declared that he had not done his duty. The steamer belonged to him, and he insisted on coming on board.

"I came off for my wife," said Griffin Leeds. "I want her to go on shore with me."

This demand seemed to me a more serious complication than that of Captain Boomsby's ridiculous suit. I did not know much about law, but I had an idea that a man had a right to his own wife. Colonel Shepard was a lawyer, though he did not practise his profession, and I was entirely willing to leave this matter to him, for he was more interested in it than any other person, as his wife was an invalid, and needed Chloe's attentions more than the other ladies.

"Don't let her go," said the Colonel; and so said all the ladies.

"You can't separate man and wife," said Cornwood.

"We don't propose to separate man and wife," replied Colonel Shepard, before I had time to say anything. "If his wife wants to go, she is at perfect liberty to do so. Ask Chloe to come on deck," he added, turning to the steward.

The stewardess appeared a minute later.

"Here, Chloe, I want you to come on shore with me," shouted Griffin Leeds, when he saw his wife. "I have got a room all furnished for you, and I've got a situation as second waiter at a hotel."

"No, I thank you!" replied Chloe, pertly. "I'm going to stay where I am."

I was not a little surprised to hear her make this answer, for I supposed she would follow the fortunes of her husband, whatever they were. I knew nothing in regard to their marital relations, whether they were pleasant or otherwise, though I had never seen anything to lead me to suppose they were unpleasant.

"I want you to come with me; you are my wife and you must come!" said Griffin, angrily. "I forbid your going in this steamer."

"You can forbid all day if you like; I'm going in the steamer!" answered Chloe, very decidedly. "I don't go with you any more, if I can help it."

"You are my wife, and you can't help it," retorted the husband.

"I haven't got anything more to say about it. I won't go with you; and that's the whole of it," said the stewardess, retreating to the cabin.

Griffin Leeds swore like a pirate, and declared

he would be the death of his wife if she didn't come with him. He called upon the officer to arrest Chloe, and compel her to go on shore with him.

"Give me a proper warrant, and I will arrest her," replied the officer, laughing.

"I am her husband; and I tell you to take her out of that steamer," cried Griffin, foaming with wrath.

"I don't know that you are her husband; and if I did, I would not meddle with her," replied the officer, who seemed to enjoy the situation. "Our business is finished on board of this craft:" and he returned to the boat.

"This seems to be rather a hard case," interposed Cornwood. "I don't think we have any right to separate man and wife."

"The woman is a free citizen of Florida," added the officer; "and she can go where she pleases without any restraint."

"So far as the legal question is concerned, I suppose the woman cannot be put under any restraint," said Cornwood; "but the idea of carrying off the woman against the protest of her husband, is not, morally, the right thing to do. I think you had better discharge the woman, and then you will be free from the possibility of blame."

"I don't propose to meddle with the matter in any way," I replied promptly. "I don't know but you have a wife. If she should come here and protest against my carrying you off up the river, I don't think I should pay any attention to her."

"That's another question," replied Cornwood, smartly.

"I don't think it is: what is sauce for goose is sauce for gander. You will take the wheel, Mr. Cornwood. Forward, there! Heave up the anchor."

As soon as the anchor was atrip, I rang the bell to go ahead.

CHAPTER XXI.

A VISIT TO ORANGE PARK.

CORNWOOD was slow to move, after I directed him to take the wheel. I saw that he was not yet in the pilot-house, when I rang the bell to go ahead. I directed the mate with Ben and Landy to prevent any of the party in the boat from coming on board, and hastened to the pilot-house. But before I reached the door Cornwood was at the wheel. He threw it over, and met the boat with the helm when she began to make headway. I was not quite sure that he did not intend to rebel; but I was ready to send him ashore the instant he did so in word or deed. My suspicions began to gather weight again. He had evidently delayed the steamer until the arrival of the boat containing Captain Boomsby and the husband of the stewardess.

I could easily fancy that the pilot was at the bottom of all the proceedings to delay or prevent the departure of the boat. The attachment was

to prevent her going at all; the claim for the stewardess was to help along the matter. It seemed to me that some heavy reward had been promised to Cornwood for his services, or he would not endanger the liberal wages he was paid for his services on board of the Sylvania. But I knew nothing about the matter, and it was useless to conjecture what he was driving at.

The steamer was headed up the river, and we had actually begun our long-talked-of trip. Cornwood steered the boat as well as usual, but he was moody and silent. If he was ugly and bent on mischief, the worst he could do, as I understood the matter, was to run the steamer aground. This would not be a very serious calamity, and could involve no worse consequences than a loss of time. I was not alarmed at anything he might do while we were sailing up the river. I seated myself at the side of the wheel, and allowed things to take their course, as, in New Jersey, when it rains, they let it rain. But if Cornwood was angry, he cooled off in the course of half an hour, and remarked that it was a delightful day for the start. I was not obstinate on this point, and I agreed with him.

"I don't think you treated me quite fairly, Cap-

tain Garningham, in the affairs of poor Griff and his wife," said he, when the steamer was off Mulberry Grove.

"Didn't treat you fairly!" I exclaimed, astonished at this new phase of the argument. "Do I treat you unfairly because I won't have a man with murder in his heart on board? Do I treat you unfairly because his wife refuses to leave her place?"

"I have told you the reason why I am interested in the man; I am under obligations to him," added Cornwood.

"I have no objection to your being interested in him to the last day of his life; but I am not sufficiently interested in him to have a man who draws a knife on another in this vessel," I answered. "I am not under obligations to him."

"I have done the best I can to serve you, and I thought a friend of mine might be entitled to some consideration," continued Cornwood, with an injured innocence of tone and manner.

"Your influence procured for him and his wife places on board; and Griffin might have retained his position, if he had behaved half as well as his wife has."

"Poor Griff lay down on the deck to take a nap —"

"I don't care to hear that argument over again. I could have passed over the scuffle, if he had not drawn his knife when there was nothing to provoke him," I interposed.

"The assistant engineer did not tell the truth when he said he did not lay the weight of his hand on him," protested Cornwood.

"I believe he did. I don't believe Griffin was asleep. He lay down with his ear to the skylight of the captain's room in order to hear what passed between me and the mate. This is the second time Griffin was caught in the act of listening. More than this, the assistant engineer was on the watch, by my order, for eavesdroppers, as will appear at the trial," I replied, with energy.

"By your orders?" exclaimed Cornwood.

"By my orders. Both the engineer and the assistant were asked to do this duty, because Griffin was seen before, skulking where he had no business to be."

"The mate assaulted poor Griff the other day," added the pilot.

"He caught him listening under the windows of our room, and took him by the collar for it, if that is what you mean by assaulting him."

"He had no right to take him by the collar."

"I will grant that he had not; but when one is in the midst of eavesdroppers, his indignation may get the better of his judgment," I replied.

"That was just the case with poor Griff; but he is a poor man, and not the son of an ex-governor; and he is persecuted to the full penalty of the law for it," growled Cornwood.

"I think there is some difference in the cases. Griffin was skulking about, trying to listen to conversation which did not concern him. If he wants to take a nap, he lies down with his ear to an open skylight. Mr. Washburn is charged with the discipline of the vessel; and when your friend attempted to escape from the place where he was caught, the mate took him by the collar. Griffin, or you, as his counsel, might have prosecuted him for the assault, if you had thought proper to do so," I answered.

"I am sorry I did not do so, after what has happened since."

"I am sorry you did not, for it would have brought to light some things which have not yet been ventilated."

"What do you mean by that, captain?" demanded the pilot, looking furtively into my face.

"It is not necessary to explain matters that have

not yet been brought into the case," I replied coldly. "I think we had better drop the subject, and not allude to it again. As a guide and pilot, I am entirely satisfied with you. Griffin Leeds has been discharged; and he cannot be employed again under any circumstances on this vessel. I won't have a man about who is skulking under windows, listening to what don't concern him, or a man who will draw a knife on another."

"The steward wants to know at what hour he shall serve dinner in the cabin to-day?" asked Cobbington, poking his head into the pilot-house at this moment.

For some reason not apparent to me, the pilot was so startled at the sound of the new waiter's voice that he let go the wheel, as he was swinging the boat around at a bend of the river. The wheel flew over with force enough to knock a man down if it had hit him. I immediately grasped the spokes, and began to heave it over again.

"No harm done; my hand slipped," said the pilot.

"Good morning, Mr. Cornwood," added the new waiter, with a broad grin on his face. "I didn't know you were the pilot of this steamer. I hope you are very well."

"Very well," answered Cornwood, with an utterly disgusted expression on his face, as he continued to throw the wheel over.

"I think the passengers will not dine on board to-day," I replied to the question of the waiter. "But I will let the steward know in season."

The forward-cabin steward retired. It was evident that Cornwood had not seen him on board before, and that he was not at all pleased to have him as a fellow-voyager on the river. Cobbington looked as though he had gained twenty pounds in flesh since he came on board on Saturday night. In his new clothes he presented a very neat appearance; and he had done his duty faithfully. He was so familiar with his work, that he required scarcely any instruction. All hands were greatly interested in his accounts of forest life in Florida, and he appeared to be a general favorite. By Monday morning, he was generally called the "sportsman."

"Is that man employed on board?" asked Cornwood, soon after Cobbington took his head out of the door.

"He is; he takes the place of Griffin Leeds," I replied.

"How long has he been on board?"

"He came on Saturday night."

"He is a good-for-nothing vagabond!" exclaimed the pilot.

"He has had a hard time of it in Florida, according to his own account. If he does his duty, that is all I want of him," I added.

"Where did you pick him up?"

"He hailed Mr. Washburn in the street when I was with him, and we brought him off with us. He was in a starving condition, and Captain Boomsby, at whose house he used to have a room, refused to give him even a supper. I believe he has been in the snake business to some extent," I replied, indifferently.

I knew very well that Cornwood wished to know precisely what our relations were with Cobbington; but he was not so simple as to ask any questions about them. I could not prove that Captain Boomsby had placed the moccasin in the closet of the room where he had confined me, for my benefit, but I could prove that the explanation of the presence of the snake there was without any foundation in truth. Griffin Leeds had discovered by listening to the conversation of the mate and myself, that we were investigating the matter, and had a clue to Cobbington. Then Cornwood had

sent a note to the saloon-keeper to this effect, and Captain Boomsby had bribed the invalid with a dollar to lie about the matter.

While I was reasonably certain in regard to such portions of the chain of the story as I had been compelled to supply, I could not prove all I believed. On the other hand, Cornwood was an exceedingly valuable person to me as guide and pilot, and I was unwilling to dispense with his services until he showed the cloven foot too palpably to be retained.

The Sylvania was approaching Orange Park, a place which Colonel Shepard desired to visit. A sign four hundred feet long, and fifteen feet high, the largest in the world, indicates the locality. It can be read a mile off, and the visitor "who runs may read." Cornwood ran the steamer alongside the long pier, and our passengers landed. Mr. Benedict, the enterprising Rhode Islander who owns the vast estate of nine thousand acres, was on the wharf to welcome them. The place had formerly been an immense sugar plantation; but the present owner had cut it up into small farms and town lots, and considerable progress had been made in peopling it with residents from the North.

The bluffs were thirty feet high on the river, and

the highest elevation was seventy feet, about the highest on the St. Johns. Quite a number of dwelling-houses had been erected, including a hotel, and the place had a store, a school, and a hall for religious services. Several thousand orange-trees had been set out, and were in a thrifty condition. They set out stumps of sour orange-trees, three inches in diameter, and graft into them two shoots, a few inches above the ground. These had grown two or three feet in a single year, and in five or six years they would be in bearing condition. Young trees, five or six feet high, are also set out. If the orange grower is successful, the crop is exceedingly profitable.

Lots of from one to twenty acres were sold at from one to thirteen hundred dollars, as they were nearer or farther from the river. A house that would answer the purpose of a settler could be built for one hundred and thirty dollars, and a comfortable cottage for five hundred dollars.

We walked up to the hotel, and dined with the proprietor.

CHAPTER XXII.

FISHING IN DOCTOR'S LAKE.

AFTER a very good dinner, we were invited to take a ride in an Orange Park carriage. The vehicle was a platform wagon, with stakes, such as is called a "hay rigging" in some parts of the North, drawn by a pair of mules. I found that a mule in this locality cost more than a house for the ordinary settler. On the platform were placed chairs enough to seat all the party, including Cornwood, Washburn, and myself. The proprietor was the driver, and as we proceeded on the excursion, he explained everything of interest. He drove to an old orange-tree that had borne four thousand oranges that year. Near it was a tangled grove of fig-trees, the first I had ever seen.

From this point we struck into the woods. We crossed a clear brook which was never dry; and Miss Margie asked if there were any snakes on the place. Mr. Benedict thought there might be, though he had never seen any.

"Oh, isn't that magnificent! Perfectly lovely!" cried Miss Edith in ecstasies.

"Beautiful!" added Miss Margie. "Did you ever see anything like it?"

I had not, for one. The sight which had called forth these enthusiastic exclamations was a perfect forest of jasmine in full blossom. The trees that grew near the brook were of a young growth, and for half an acre in extent they were loaded with jasmine vines so thickly covered with flowers that the green leaves could hardly be seen. The ladies were all delighted. Washburn and I got out, and gathered half a cord or so of the vines, thus loaded with blossoms, and the wagon was as fragrant as a perfume shop.

We entered a forest of pines, where we found a house built by a couple of young men who had been several years in Cuba, and intended to cultivate the sugar-cane. In the midst of the woods we came to an old church, without a house within a mile of it, and which had been three or four miles from any dwelling in the days when it was used. It was a rather large log-house, now in a ruinous condition, in which the planters and their families had once attended divine services. Not far from it the proprietor stopped his team, and

we all got off the wagon. We were conducted to the "Roaring Magnetic Spring," which was one of the features of the place. Florida is a great place for springs of various kinds. We were all arranged on a wooden platform over the spring, which was a tunnel-shaped cavity in the blue sand of the earth, about ten feet deep.

"Now keep still a moment," said Mr. Benedict.

We listened, and the roaring of the spring was easily heard when the voices of the party did not drown it.

"Isn't it beautiful!" exclaimed Miss Margie, as she bent over and gazed into the spring, the waters of which, for six feet down, were as clear as crystal. "Aren't those sand clouds pretty?"

As the water boiled up from the bottom of the spring, it carried the sand up in clearly-curved clouds until their own gravity caused the particles to sink, and again be thrown up by the force of the water. The party watched this phenomenon with interest for some time, for not one of them had ever seen anything like it, with the exception of Mr. Cornwood.

"Now, I want to show you something still more remarkable," continued the proprietor, as he produced two long, narrow strips of board. "You

have heard the roaring of the spring, and now I want to convince you that it is magnetic."

He placed the ends of the strips at the bottom of the spring, and then disposed of each of the other ends on the sides of Colonel Shepard's head. The same experiment was then tried upon Mr. Tiffany, and all the other members of the party. The roaring seemed to penetrate, and pass through one's head. Owen declared that the process had cured him of a headache he had had all day; but Mr. Tiffany, while he was much interested in the phenomenon, was somewhat skeptical in regard to the magnetic properties of the spring.

We resumed our seats on the Orange Park carriage, and rode to Doctor's Lake. It was said to be a dozen miles long, and from one to three miles wide. We were told there were plenty of fish in this lake, and we were disposed to verify the truth of the assertion. We returned to the hotel, delighted with our drive, and Mrs. Shepard declared that she should like to live at Orange Park. Before we left, the Colonel had bargained for two lots on the St. Johns, and to have them covered with orange-trees. We started for the end of the pier where the steamer lay, for the shallow water did not permit a near approach to the land.

As we approached the Sylvania, we heard a scream from a woman on board. I was not a little startled by the sound, and Washburn and I broke into a run. On the quarter-deck we found Griffin Leeds and Chloe. Her husband had seized her by the arm, and was dragging her towards the gangway. Already Ben Bowman and the two deck-hands were rushing to her assistance, and before we could reach the scene of action they had grappled with Leeds, and released Chloe.

The stewardess retreated to the farthest part of the deck, and appeared to be in mortal terror of her husband. Griffin Leeds drew a knife, — not the one he had used before, for that was in the possession of the city marshal of Jacksonville, — and threatened to take the life of any one that interfered with him. It was evident that he had seen the party coming from the hotel, and had made a desperate effort to secure possession of his wife before we could defeat his purpose. I was afraid some of the ship's company would get hurt when I saw the knife. Griffin's wrath seemed to be especially kindled against the assistant engineer, on account of the affair on Saturday.

"You white-livered villain!" said he, gnashing his teeth, with a savage oath, "I will teach you to meddle with me!"

He rushed at Ben, with the knife gleaming in the air; but Ben, who was as cool as when on duty in the engine-room, grasped his uplifted arm with the left hand, while he placed his right on the throat of the assassin. Though the engineer was no taller or heavier than I was, he was very athletic and very active. He did not move or make any demonstration till the assailant was within reach of him, and then he grappled with him. In vain Griffin Leeds struggled to release his hand from the grasp of the engineer, who held it as firmly as though it had been screwed up in the vise in the engine-room.

Buck Lingley was not an instant behind Ben in taking prompt action. He seized the other hand of the furious octoroon, while Hop Tossford laid both hands on his coat-collar behind. In another instant Griffin Leeds was borne down upon the deck. The young ladies of our party began to scream and run up the pier; and Mrs. Shepard was so agitated that her husband feared for the consequences.

"Tie his hands behind him, and put him ashore!" I shouted.

My order was promptly obeyed, and Ben and Buck began to march the desperate husband up the pier.

"There is no more danger of him, ladies," said Ben, as he approached the young ladies.

Miss Margie and Miss Edith halted, and when the men with their prisoner had passed them, they scampered to the steamer as fast as they could run. Mrs. Shepard was assisted on board, and the danger seemed to be passed. Chloe was herself again, and flew to the assistance of the invalid lady. But Mrs. Shepard recovered from her agitation in a few minutes.

"I say, Alick, how much more of this sort of thing are we to have," asked Owen, when the excitement had subsided. "Are we to have a scene like this every day in the week?"

"I hope not," I replied.

"We had better let the man's wife go than have him following us in this sort of fashion. How came the fellow up here, when we left him at Jacksonville this forenoon?"

"I suppose he came up in that steamer," I answered, pointing to a boat a couple of miles up the river. "The hands ought not to have let the fellow come on board."

"The rascal is a regular butcher, and we must all follow the American fashion of carrying a revolver."

"I see just how it was: we had to run in at the side of this pier, so that a steamer that had occasion to stop here could make a landing at the end of the wharf."

"Is that the reason why that villain wanted to stab somebody?" asked Owen, with a wondering stare.

"Well, not exactly. The crew of the Sylvania were on the forecastle, under the awning, for I saw them rushing aft when I heard the woman scream," I continued.

"Then it was because the crew were on the forecastle?" inquired my cousin, with open mouth.

"When Griffin landed from that steamer, he probably saw Chloe on the quarter-deck, or if he did not, he went into the cabin and found her. The crew being forward of the deck-house did not see him. She refused to leave the steamer with him, and he undertook to take her away by force," I explained.

"And you think that makes it all right, Alick?" asked Owen.

"I think not. If I had thought of such a thing as Griffin's coming on board, I should have set a watch to prevent him from doing so. I shall take this precaution in future."

"Does that mean that you will set a watch in the future?" asked Owen, seriously.

"That is just what it means: and one is lucky when the dull brain of a Briton catches the idea," I replied.

The appearance of the young ladies called Owen away, and I announced to the passengers that they would want their fishing-gear in the course of half an hour. I had plenty of fishing-tackle of all sorts which I kept on board; and I knew that all the gentlemen in the cabin, unless it was Mr. Tiffany, were supplied with all the implements for fishing and shooting. Cornwood had procured a supply of bait while we were at dinner. The fasts were cast off, and we backed out into the river. Ben and Buck had returned, having made their prisoner fast to the railing of the pier, at the suggestion of Mr. Benedict, who said he would look out for him.

The steamer stopped when she was clear of the pier, and then went ahead. The pilot said he was perfectly familiar with the navigation of Doctor's Lake, having surveyed it in the service of the State. The water was very shallow near the shore, where we had broken through the bushes to its brink; but it was said to be very deep in

many parts. I had read that the frequent passage of steamers over the waters of the St. Johns had driven the frightened fish into such places as Doctor's Lake. We entered its waters, and steamed several miles up the lake. Then the pilot rang the gong, and the vessel was soon at rest.

We baited our hooks, and dropped the lines into the lake. Miss Margie was the first to hook a fish. After a hard pull she got him to the top of the water. It was a catfish weighing twelve pounds. The Colonel and Owen were disgusted. A catfish is an exaggerated hornpout, or "bullhead." None but negroes eat them at the South.

CHAPTER XXIII.

TROLLING FOR BLACK BASS.

"THE idea of fishing for catfish is absurd!" exclaimed Colonel Shepard. "It isn't a proper use to put a white man to."

"Don't fish so deep, then," suggested Cornwood. "The catfish live on the bottom."

I was as much disgusted with the idea of catching catfish as the Colonel, for I had seen plenty of them caught by the negroes on the wharves at Jacksonville. I took a good-sized spoon-hook, with three hundred feet of line attached to it, just as I had used it in Lake Superior, and cast the hook as far out into the water as I could. I trolled it home, and obtained quite a heavy bite. I tried it again, and this time hauled in a fish that would weigh six pounds.

"What's that, Mr. Cornwood?" I asked, as I brought the fish inboard.

"That's a black trout," replied the pilot.

"Black trout!" replied the Colonel, who was a

great fisherman. "That isn't a trout of any sort! It is a black bass."

"We call them black trout on the St. Johns, where they are very plenty at some seasons of the year," added Cornwood.

"He is not quite like our black bass of the lakes of the State of New York; his head is larger," added the Colonel, after he had looked the fish over. "Still he is a black bass, and a big one too."

"Do you call that a big one?" demanded Cornwood contemptuously.

"I have fished a great deal in the New York lakes, and I never saw a black bass that would weigh more than four pounds and a half, though I have heard of them that weighed five."

"I have caught them that would weigh twelve," added the pilot.

The Colonel looked at him as though he were a descendant of the father of lies. I had three more spoon-hooks, with the necessary lines, two of which I had bought on the northern shore of Lake Superior. It was odd to think of fishing with them here in Florida. I sent Cornwood to the pilot-house, and told Moses to give the steamer about four knots an hour, for this was the way I used to do on Lakes Huron and Superior.

We had not room for more than four lines at the stern for trolling. I offered one of them to Mr. Tiffany; but he declined, pleading that he had no skill in this kind of fishing. The Colonel, Owen, Gus Shepard, and I, handled the lines. Going at four knots, the screw hardly broke the water, though possibly it astonished the fishes. Our lines had hardly run out their length before two of us had each a fish on his hook. The Colonel and I brought in a fish apiece, about the size of the one I had caught before. Owen and Gus took their turn while we were getting our fish off the hook. My cousin lost his, but Gus got his on board. The sport was quite equal to blue-fishing, which I had tried on the coast of Maine. In an hour we had twenty of them, all black bass. Miss Margie wished she might fish; I told her to put on her thick gloves and she might try. I baited the spoon-hook with a live little fish the pilot had procured, and gave her the line. In a few minutes she was tugging away at a fish. He was unusually gamy, leaping out of the water a dozen times on his way to the boat.

"I can't get him any further, captain!" cried she, out of breath with her exertions. I took the line from her, and hauled in the largest bass we had yet seen.

"It would be wicked to catch any more, for we can't use them," said the Colonel. "Here, steward, weigh this fish, if you please."

The bass Miss Margie had caught carried the spring scale down to twelve and a quarter.

"Where is Mr. Cornwood?" demanded Colonel Shepard; and he rushed forward to the pilot-house. "Mr. Cornwood, I doubted your statement when you said you had seen a black trout, or bass, that would weigh twelve pounds. I beg your pardon, for we have one that will weigh twelve and a quarter."

"I hope you will yet catch a bigger one, Colonel Shepard," replied the pilot, delighted to be vindicated.

"Now let her out, and run for Green Cove Springs," I interposed.

The deck-hands wound up the lines; we were soon out of the lake, and again headed up the St. Johns River. All the party were exhilarated by the fine sport we had had on the lake, and they were devoting themselves to a particular examination of the fish. Ben Bowman laid aside the dignity of his office as assistant engineer, and proceeded to dress the fish, which he was better qualified to do than any other person on board. It was

about six o'clock in the afternoon when we finished fishing, and the cabin party were called to supper before we got out of the lake. As soon as they had sufficiently discussed the fish, they went below.

The mate relieved Cornwood at the wheel while the latter went to supper, which was ready at the same hour as the cabin meal. I preferred to take my supper with Washburn, and so I waited till half an hour later. I was talking with him about the fishing, when Chloe came to the door of the pilot-house, and with her usual smile said she would like to see me. I went out on the forecastle with her, for I thought she had taken the particular time when Cornwood was at supper to speak with me.

"Captain Garningham, I am willing to leave the Sylvania when the boat gets to Green Cove Springs, for I know that I am making a great deal of trouble on board," said she, showing her pretty white teeth.

"I was not aware that you had made any trouble on board," I replied. "It is your husband who has made all the trouble."

"Well, it is on my account; and if I leave the Sylvania, he will not trouble you any more," she added.

"I don't think the ladies in the cabin would be willing that you should leave."

"I am sure Griffin will be in Green Cove Springs to-night, and he will make a heap of trouble there, as he has done to-day," continued Chloe. "I don't want to keep you in hot water all the time on my account."

"We understand the situation better than before, and we shall have no further trouble with Griffin. I shall have a hand forward and another aft whenever we are at anchor, or at a wharf, so that he can't get on board of the steamer," I replied. "If you don't want to go with him, all you have to do is to stay on board."

"I don't want to go with him," said she, with a good deal of energy. "If I could have found a place in a steamer going north, or anywhere that would take me away from him, I would have left him a year ago;" and her bright eyes snapped as though she meant all she said.

"How long have you been married?"

"Two years; and I was very foolish to have him. Griffin is a bad man," said she, shaking her head. "He was discharged from the Charleston steamer for getting up a fight, and drawing a knife on the steward. He beats me and abuses me, and

I have been miserable ever since I married him. I have often been afraid of my life, he is so violent, especially when he has been drinking."

"Does he drink hard?"

"Only when he is ashore. If he did it on board any steamer, they would discharge him right off. When this trip in the Sylvania is done, I shall have a little money, and then I shall leave Florida by the first train, if the ladies will give me a recommendation so that I can get a place. I mean to change my name, and keep out of Griffin's way as long as I live, for he will kill me if I live with him. I had no comfort for a year till I came on board of this vessel."

"You were living in St. Augustine, were you?"

"Lived everywhere; we had been in St. Augustine two months when we engaged on this steamer. Griffin had a place at a hotel, and was turned off for getting drunk, and fighting. He must have been very bad, or they would not have let him go when they were so short of waiters. He wouldn't let me work anywhere, though I had plenty of chances to wait on table, and one to go in the San Jacinto to Nassau. He was afraid I should get some money and leave him, as I told him I would after he had whipped and kicked me. I have a

mark on my shoulder where he bit me, not a week before we came on board of this vessel."

My sympathies were greatly excited; but in a quarrel between man and wife, I had heard older people say no one should interfere unless they came to blows, and I said nothing.

"Griffin sailed in some vessel with Mr. Cornwood, I believe," I added.

"Never in this world!" protested Chloe. "He was born and raised in Fernandina, as I was; and I can tell where he was every hour of his life, up to our marriage. He was on the same steamer with me three years, and both of us were at home up to that time."

"Why did you marry him if you knew him so well?" I asked, much interested in her story.

"Because I was foolish, and thought I could manage him. Perhaps I could, if he didn't drink no liquor."

"I was not aware that he was a drinking man."

"If you had got near enough to smell his breath to-day, you would have known that he drank liquor. He never seems to be very bad, but whiskey makes him ugly."

"He seems to be a good friend of Mr. Cornwood," I suggested.

"Well, he ought to be; for Mr. Cornwood got him out of a very bad scrape when he nearly killed a man in Jacksonville last January. I don't think much of Mr. Cornwood, neither. I reckon he uses Griffin as a witness when he wants one, for Griffin will swear to anything."

"Did Mr. Cornwood ever fall overboard, and Griffin save him?"

"Never in this world! He never sailed in the same vessel with him, except this one."

"Do you know Captain Parker Boomsby, Chloe?"

"Never heard of him before."

"You had better go to the cabin now. As long as you remain on board, I will see that you are protected," I said, rising from my stool, for it was about time for the pilot to come on deck.

"Thank you, Captain Garningham. I have told the ladies how I am situated, and they promise to help me all they can," replied Chloe, as she tripped lightly to the companion-way aft.

It appeared from the statement of the stewardess that Cornwood had been lying to me right along in regard to Griffin Leeds. He had no interest in him, except to have him on board to act as a spy and listener upon me. But in spite of this fact—

and I had no doubt it was a fact—Cornwood was an exceedingly useful person on board of the Sylvania. I could not believe that he had been acting as a guide for parties, though it was plain that he was entirely familiar with the State of Florida.

The pilot took his place at the wheel, and Washburn and I went to supper. We talked freely before Cobbington, who told us that Cornwood had offered him five dollars to be a witness in a case of assault he had not seen; but he would rather starve than commit a crime.

CHAPTER XXIV.

GREEN COVE SPRINGS AND GOVERNOR'S CREEK.

BY the time we had finished our supper, the steamer was in sight of Green Cove Springs. Magnolia was abreast of us, and we had passed Hibernia; but nothing was in sight from either place except the hotels, where winter boarders from the North are domiciled, and at the former a few cottages. There were plenty of "crackers," or natives, in the country; but they did not appear to live on the banks of the river. The ladies were seated in the pilot-house, observing the scenery, which by this time had become a little monotonous, though the scene was always delightful, for we had only the varying breadth of the river, and the forest. Occasionally we saw a few old red cedars, whose fantastic forms excited attention for a time, with their trunks divided like an inverted V, near the surface of the water. The bluffs, when there were any, were covered with blackberry vines, all in blossom, so that they looked like snow banks in the distance.

"You must get up early in the morning, ladies, and take a bath in the warm water of the spring," suggested Mr. Cornwood as we approached the village, which had quite a number of houses, compared with any other place we had seen since we left Jacksonville.

Mrs. Shepard had heard of the spring, and was desirous of trying its waters. As we approached, we discovered a small steam-yacht anchored off an old wharf, nearly in front of the Union Hotel. It was a very pretty craft, very broad for her length, and evidently did not draw more than two feet of water, or perhaps three. Before we came up with her Cornwood had rung the speed-bell, and we were moving very slowly. He rang the gong when we were abreast of the yacht, and then gave two strokes of the bell to back her.

"Let go the anchor!" he shouted to the deck-hands forward, for as the passengers were to remain on board all night, I thought it was better to be off in the stream than at the wharf.

The Sylvania brought up to her cable about half-way between the end of the long pier, where the steamers made their landings, and the little steam-yacht. It was almost dark when we anchored, and I could not obtain a very good view

of the village. In the evening our musicians were called for. Then the absence of Griffin Leeds was regretted, as he played the violin; but Cobbington declared that he had played that instrument for years before he left home: only he had no fiddle. Fortunately, Landy Perkins, who played the violoncello, and was learning to play the violin, had one, and our orchestra was complete.

It was a beautiful, mild, and soft evening, and our party stayed on deck until eleven o'clock. I arranged an anchor-watch, so that two of the ship's company should be on deck all the time, one forward and the other aft, day and night. They were to allow no one to come on board, unless by permission of the captain or mate; and Washburn and I had agreed that one of us should remain on board all the time. Our passengers did not care to have strangers staring at them, and no one was willing that Griffin Leeds should put his feet on the deck of the Sylvania again.

Early in the morning the boats were dropped into the water, and put in proper condition for use. At six in the morning the steward called the passengers, as required by them, and a little later we landed them at some steps on the pier, near the shore, so that they had not far to walk. Mr.

Cornwood and I remained on shore to assist the party. At the head of the wharf we found a store, a billiard-hall and a bar-room, and other evidences of civilization. A street on the right led to the Union Hotel and the Riverside Cottages, and one on the left to Orange Cottage, the two latter being large boarding-houses, which we found were occupied by people from the North.

Following the street from the wharf, we came to the Clarendon Hotel, the most pretentious establishment in the place. At the office of this house Cornwood obtained tickets for the baths. The spring and the bathing-houses are inclosed in a park, ornamented with live-oaks. We descended to the spring, around which a platform is built. The spring was similar to that we had seen at Orange Park, though there were no clouds of sand rising from the bottom of it. Though the water was eighteen feet deep, we could see to the bottom of the tunnel-shaped hole from which it issued. Its temperature was 76°, and it had a very strong odor of sulphur.

We all drank a dipper each of the water, which was perfectly transparent, and I thought it was not "bad to take" as a medicine. There is a bath for ladies, and another for gentlemen. Ours was

a swimming-bath, about sixty feet long; and I must say that the water was perfectly delightful. I was told that the place was bad for consumptives, but the water was excellent for rheumatism, dyspepsia, and kidney complaints; but as I had none of them, I know nothing at all about its virtues. Colonel Shepard declared that he felt like a new man after the bath, and even the invalid Mrs. Shepard was as frisky as a young lamb. The bath was certainly a great luxury to all of us. We took a walk about the place, and found the village was very much like the rural part of Jacksonville. The gardens were crowded with orange-trees, and the mocking-birds filled the air with their melody.

In walking over to Orange Cottage we had to cross a bridge, about fifteen feet above the water, which was a stream flowing from the spring. It was the clearest water I had ever seen, and I have gazed into the crystal tide of Lake Superior, which has a great reputation for its purity. A boat was floating on the surface, and I saw great catfish swimming lazily out of the pool. Back of the village was the forest of pine, magnolia, and live-oak. We walked far enough to see the homes of some of the crackers, which were rude and primitive.

After breakfast we landed again, and followed "St. David's Path" to Magnolia. It was through the woods, on the bank of the river. "St. David," though he was not the original champion of Wales, had a very fine residence near the entrance to the wood. I believe he was canonized for the ink he made. Near the house we found some magnolia leaves that were nearly a foot long. The blue sand in the path was as hard as a rock, and it was strange that anything would grow in it.

The proprietor of Orange Park resented the idea, when some one called the soil nothing but blue sand; and taking up a handful of it, he rubbed it between his palms. The skin was considerably stained by the operation, which could not have been the case if the earth had been simply house-sand, as it is called in the North. We all knew that the finest oranges, bananas, lemons, sugar-cane, as well as strawberries and garden vegetables, grew out of it.

At the bridge which crosses Governor's Creek, on the other side of which is the Magnolia House, we found the boats, which had been ordered to be here. We all embarked, and ascended the creek. Our course was through water-weeds and tiger-lilies; but we soon came to clear water. An old mill stood by the shore.

"There is a friend of yours, Captain Garningham," said Cornwood, as he pointed to a log, one end of which was submerged in the creek.

On the log, coiled up, with his head in the middle and resting on one of the folds of his body, was a moccasin snake just like the one I had seen in the attic room of Captain Boomsby's house.

"Mercy!" exclaimed Miss Margie. "It is a snake! Let us get away from here!"

"Don't be alarmed, Miss Tiffany," interposed the guide. "He is fast asleep."

"But he may wake, and bite some of us," insisted Miss Margie.

"If he wakes, the first thing he will do will be to run away. It is a moccasin, and his bite is poisonous; but he can't bite in the water."

Cornwood picked up a boat-hook, but the snake was just out of his reach. The men backed the boat a little, and the guide just touched the tail of the reptile. This woke him, and without waiting to bid adieu to the party, he scurried up the log, and disappeared in the trees on the bank of the stream. Miss Margie was greatly relieved when he was gone. The oarsmen gave way again, but had not taken three strokes before one of them tipped over an alligator in the water. He was a

little fellow, and made off with all his might, to the great amusement of the party. The men had not taken half a dozen strokes more, before another alligator was turned over by an oar. This was a larger one than the other, and his head was lifted entirely out of the water. At the same moment Cornwood, who was standing in the bow of the boat, aimed a revolver at him, and fired.

Miss Margie gave a little scream at the report of the pistol. The ball had evidently done its work, for the reptile was floundering on the top of the water, instead of running away, as the other one had done. The guide fired again; and after a little more struggling, the alligator lay still on the top of the water.

"We will tow him ashore and let you look at him, if you wish," said the guide.

"No, I thank you; not on my account," added Miss Margie.

"I should really like to see him," said Miss Edith.

"Then you shall see him," replied Owen.

But there was no shore in the vicinity to tow him to; and the guide suggested that he should be allowed to remain, while we followed the other boat to the head of boat navigation on the creek,

which was only a short distance farther. The shore was under water, and the trees grew out of it. The guide said this was a specimen of a portion of the Ocklawaha, on a small scale. But we soon came to higher banks, which were covered with a fragrant blossom called the "swamp pink" in some parts of the North. The air was loaded with its perfume, and the young ladies were in ecstasies over the sweetness of the blossoms, and the beautiful appearance of the banks of the stream. Beyond this we found the shore covered with another blossom, the swamp blueberry. The bushes lined the shore, and were so covered with blossoms that they seemed to be all there was of them. The young ladies wanted to gather some, and the men filled every available place in the boat with these and the swamp pinks.

On our return we picked up the alligator, making a line fast to him, and towing him down to the bridge. We made a landing under the bluff, and hauled the reptile out of the water. He was about five feet long. Buck pried his mouth open, so that the ladies could see his teeth. Cornwood asked Miss Margie if she did not want a piece of him for her supper, declaring that he had eaten a portion of the tail, which he considered very

good. The English maiden preferred beef and mutton.

We did not want the alligator, and we left him where he was. Cornwood said some native would take possession of him, and in two or three months his teeth would be for sale in the stores at Jacksonville. We were on board in time for dinner at one, the hour at which it had been ordered. In the afternoon I received a visit from the gentleman who was sailing the little steam-yacht near us. He was a New Yorker, spending the winter in Florida, and had his wife and daughter on board. I introduced him to our party, and showed him all over the Sylvania.

CHAPTER XXV.

ALLIGATOR SHOOTING ON BLACK CREEK.

AFTER supper I returned the visit of Mr. Garbrook, the owner and captain of the little steam-yacht. She was a perfect beauty, and, small as she was, she had two state-rooms for the owner and his family, and a nice little cabin. The whole ship's company besides the owner, consisted of an engineer and a boy. Forward of the engine were a cook-room, a little cabin, and the pilot-house, the latter so small that only one person could occupy it at the same time.

"Who is the cook?" I asked, wondering how he managed to run the boat with only two hands.

"Sometimes the boy does the cooking, and sometimes I do it; but we don't live very high on board," said Mr. Garbrook, laughing. "We take most of our meals on shore when we are near a hotel."

"I think I should prefer a little more room," I added.

"So should I; but a steamer of your size draws too much water. I have an orange plantation back of Picolata; I have to run up Five-Mile Creek to reach it by water; and it is not deep enough for such a craft as I would like," added Mr. Garbrook.

"I was thinking of going up Black Creek to-morrow, to Middleburg; but I cannot find a pilot. I was going to ask your party to accompany us," continued the owner of the little steamer.

"I think I can furnish the pilot," I replied.

"Your steamer draws too much water for Black Creek, or I suppose you would run up to Middleburg in her. A great many parties make this excursion."

"I don't know that I ever heard of Black Creek before," I replied, wondering that Cornwood had not mentioned it.

Perhaps our guide did not know about Black Creek; and I pulled out of my pocket the "Suggestions" he had written out for the trip; but I could not find the name in it. If there was anything in Florida that Cornwood was not familiar with, I desired to know what it was. It would be a real enjoyment to me to find that he was not competent to pilot the little steam-yacht up Black

Creek. I was instructed to invite all our party to the excursion, if I could bring a pilot for the occasion.

I returned to the Sylvania, and I thought I would invite the party before I said anything to the pilot. I gave them what information I had obtained in regard to Black Creek and Middleburg, and they were ready to accept the invitation. I found Cornwood on the forecastle, smoking his cigar, and opened the matter by informing him that the party were going up Black Creek the next day.

"But this boat draws too much water to go up to Middleburg," said the pilot, promptly. "She can't go half-way up there."

"But we are to go in that little steam-yacht," I added.

"That's another thing; I dare say she would go up if there was nothing but a little fog under her," laughed Cornwood.

"But we wish you to pilot her up the creek," I continued.

"I will do it with the greatest pleasure," he answered.

I was taken aback by this ready reply, for I had felt confident that I had found something the Floridian could not do.

"You did not mention Black Creek in the paper you wrote," I suggested.

"Neither did I mention Lake Griffin, because it would be impossible to get up there in a boat drawing eight feet of water," replied Cornwood.

The pilot was not to be caught. I sent word to Mr. Garbrook that our party would be happy to join his family in the excursion up Black Creek, and that I would furnish a pilot. I noticed considerable activity on board of the Gazelle, for that was the name of the steam-yacht, after I sent the message.

I had heard nothing of Griffin Leeds during the day. Though I had no doubt he was in Green Cove Springs, he made no attempt to come on board. I concluded that he intended to wait for a more favorable opportunity to recover possession of his wife; but I was determined that no such chance should be afforded to him.

At nine in the morning we went on board of the Gazelle, and she weighed anchor immediately. Cornwood took possession of the pilot-house, declaring that he had never been confined in a canary-bird's cage before. But he was good-natured about it, and when the boy had got up the anchor, Cornwood rang the bell to start the

engine. Everything worked as regularly as though the little yacht had been a steamer of a thousand tons. The pilot ran the boat down the river about a mile below Magnolia, and then stood into an inlet, at the head of which we found the stream. It was a considerable river, but Cornwood seemed to be quite at home in it. It was a crooked stream, but the pilot ran from one side to the other, talking to me all the time with the utmost indifference.

I observed him for a couple of hours, until I was entirely satisfied that he knew what he was about, and then joined the party astern. It was seldom that a steamer disturbed the waters of Black Creek, never in these days, except when a party of curious excursionists desired to explore the lonely region. The Gazelle made about eight knots an hour, and at eleven o'clock we were fast to a dilapidated pier at the ruined town of Middleburg. It lay about half-way between the St. Johns and the Atlantic, Gulf and West India Company's Railroad, extending from Fernandina to Cedar Keys, on the Gulf of Mexico, intended as part of a quick route to Havana. The building of this railroad, by diverting from it the trade and transportation of a considerable region of country,

had utterly ruined Middleburg, and it was as lone and deserted as Pompeii under the ashes of Vesuvius. Hardly a family was to be found in its abandoned houses.

A glance at the ruins was enough to satisfy the party, especially as Cornwood warned us not to enter the houses, or we should be covered with fleas. These pests are not uncommon in Florida. Green Cove Springs formerly had some, which were supposed to be scattered through the place by the pigs that ran at large. The evil was corrected by keeping them out of the village. The fleas were a vastly greater terror to the ladies than the alligators, of which there were a great many in the creek. Its quiet waters, not often disturbed by steamers, afforded them a peaceful retreat. Owen and Colonel Shepard had brought their guns with them, and had fired at some of the larger ones seen on the shore; but the saurians might have laughed at them, if they were given to expressing themselves in that manner. Cornwood smiled every time one of them fired.

We ran up the "North Prong" of the river a few miles. Under the shade of some spreading oaks we stopped for the lunch which our host had provided. It had been obtained at the hotels, and

after our sail we were in condition to enjoy it. The alligators were larger and more plentiful, and while the Gazelle was at rest they were more disposed to show themselves on the sandy beach above us. Owen and the Colonel fired at them several times; but they seemed to take no notice of the shots, and the pilot laughed as usual.

"You haven't graduated as alligator sportsmen yet," said Cornwood when they had wasted a large quantity of powder and ball. "You might as well fire at an iron-clad, as at the back and sides of an alligator as large as those are."

Owen handed him his gun, which was one of the most expensive pieces, intended for deer and other large game. The pilot loaded it himself, and said he should try for the largest reptile in the group on the beach. He fired. The alligator gave a spring, and began to flounder in the sand, while his companions deserted him, taking to the water. In another moment he was dead.

"What do you aim at, Mr. Cornwood?" asked Owen, with admiration at the skill of the Floridian.

"It depends on circumstances," replied the pilot. "If the alligator is in such a position that I can take him in the eye, as that one was, and send the ball diagonally through his head, I fire at the

eye. If he lies so that I can put the ball in behind his forward flipper, and have it pass forward, I take him there. Sometimes he is in such a position that you can't hit him in either of these places, and it is no more use to fire at him than it is to shoot into the water."

"You made an end of that fellow, at any rate," added Colonel Shepard. "I think we had better run over and take a look at him."

The pilot ran the boat near enough to the beach so that we could jump ashore. I took a measure with me, and the alligator proved to be ten feet and four inches long. Owen considered himself a good shot, and he was somewhat mortified at his ill-success in shooting the saurian. We ran farther up the creek till we saw another group of them on the sand. The steam was shut off as soon as they came in sight around a bend. The boat went ahead a considerable distance after the screw stopped. On this beach were a number of parallel crooked lines, where the alligators had crawled on the sand. One of the reptiles raised his head, and seemed to be in doubt whether or not he should take to the water at the approach of the steamer.

Owen raised his piece and fired. All but one of the alligators scurried into the water, and dis-

appeared. One remained on the beach motionless. The Gazelle was started, and on reaching the shore we found the reptile was as dead as he could be. He was larger than the other, his length being eleven feet and two inches. My cousin wanted to take him back to the Springs, and we hauled him on the forecastle of the little steamer. Cornwood gave the Englishman abundant praise for what he had done. After three attempts farther up the stream, Colonel Shepard shot one seven feet long. This was considered enough for one day, and we started on the return. At six we put our party on board of the Sylvania, with many thanks to Mr. Garbrook for the pleasure of the excursion.

We had no further business in Green Cove Springs; but Owen insisted that we must reciprocate the hospitality of the Garbrooks, and I was asked to plan an excursion for the next day. There was no locality above Jacksonville to which our friends had not been; and I proposed to breakfast the Gazelle's people on board, and starting at six in the morning make a trip to Fort George Island, where the Garbrooks had never been, or even below Jacksonville on the river. The plan was received with acclamation, and I hastened on board of the Gazelle to present the invitation of Owen.

Our party were all up at five the next morning, for they did not omit the swimming-bath a single day while they were at the Springs; and they returned in season for the Sylvania, which had hauled up to the pier to start on the excursion at the appointed hour. Washburn had filled the bunkers of the steamer with light wood, which is plenty and cheap on the St. Johns, and made steam very rapidly. I told Moses Brickland to make the best time he could with safety, and at the breakfast-hour I found we were making twelve knots.

Our guests were delighted with the steamer. In the forenoon, as we had a strong southerly breeze, I put on all sail, as much to show the Garbrooks how it was done, as for any other reason. This operation showed off our sailors, and pleased all the party. At eleven we reached our destination; and after lunch the party landed, and spent three hours in visiting the various localities on the island. At three we sailed again, and reached our destination at eight.

CHAPTER XXVI.

ON BOARD OF THE WETUMPKA.

THE Garbrooks were exceedingly pleasant people. Miss Garbrook, without being pretty, was a very sensible girl, and our young ladies liked her very much. The time had apparently come to part when we anchored at the Springs. The young ladies would not consider it; and then came an invitation for our party to visit Mr. Garbrook's orange plantation on Five-Mile Creek. It was accepted; and the next day Cornwood piloted us up that stream as far as the depth of water would permit, and the Gazelle took them the rest of the way. It was a delightful house, with a beautiful garden, and ten acres of orange-trees, all in full blossom, as fragrant as the boudoir of a belle.

We dined on what our host called Florida fare, consisting mainly of a roasted ham and spring chickens, with oranges, cooked and uncooked, in every conceivable form. We enjoyed the repast

and the hospitality of the plantation, and regretted that we could not remain as long as our friends desired. Then came the question of parting, and again the young ladies protested. Miss Nellie must go with them. Owen at once invited the family to go with us up the river. A long discussion followed; and the Garbrooks decided to go if we would wait till the next morning. This was agreed to; and I sent word to the mate of the Sylvania of the change in the time of sailing. The ladies remained at the house overnight, and the gentlemen returned to the steamer in the Gazelle.

At half past six the little steamer brought the ladies and the baggage of the Garbrooks on board. We got under way immediately, and in less than half an hour we were standing up the St. Johns. This addition to the number of our passengers made "a new deal" of the state-rooms and berths in the cabin. I was asked to assign them as I thought proper, and Owen told me not to consider him, for he would go into the forward cabin if necessary. Colonel Shepard and his wife retained one of the large state-rooms, and the other was assigned to Mr. Garbrook and his wife. The other two state-rooms were of good size, and had

ALLIGATOR SHOOTING ON BLACK CREEK. Page 259.

a bedstead three and a half feet wide in each. One of these was given to Miss Garbrook, and Miss Edith and Miss Margie volunteered to occupy the other, declaring that it was quite large enough for both of them. Mr. Tiffany, Gus Shepard, and Owen had each a berth, without disturbing Chloe. This arrangement was satisfactory to all the passengers.

The steamer went along at her usual speed of ten miles an hour. After breakfast, Owen and the young ladies took possession of the pilot-house, and the rest of the party were seated under the awning on the forecastle. These places afforded a view of both sides of the river, and of the long prospect ahead.

"Tocoi," said the pilot, pointing to the left. "This is the place where passengers are landed who go to St. Augustine. A railroad, fifteen miles in length, takes travellers the rest of the way."

We could see nothing but a few sheds, and Tocoi itself was of no consequence. The river was just about what we had seen all the way up from Jacksonville. At ten o'clock we ran up to the wharf at Pilatka. This is a thriving town of from fifteen hundred to two thousand inhabitants,

and, like every other place on the river, is a resort for invalids from the North. After dinner the party landed and explored the town, which is not very different from any other Florida towns we had seen. It had pleasant houses, surrounded with orange gardens.

I directed Washburn to anchor the Sylvania at some distance from the wharf in the river, partly to keep out of the way of steamers arriving, and partly to make sure that Griffin Leeds did not get on board of her. I had seen nothing of him, though I fancied he was in Green Cove Springs while we were there.

The next day was Sunday; all our passengers, and some of the ship's company, went to church. On Monday morning we sailed for Welaka, twenty-five miles farther up the river. It is opposite the mouth of the Ocklawaha River. The St. Johns was only one-third of a mile wide at this point, and began to look more like a stream and less like a lake. Colonel Shepard had chartered a small steamer for our trip up the Ocklawaha and the upper St. Johns. On Saturday afternoon, Washburn, with Ben Bowman and Dyer Perkins, had started for Jacksonville to bring the Wetumpka, for that was the name of the craft, up to this point.

She was a nearly new vessel, which the owners had built for an extra boat, but the scarcity of engineers had prevented them from putting her on the route at that time, though they had a couple on their way from a northern city. Steamboat business was exceedingly brisk at this time of the year on the upper rivers, and the owners of the line had several boats running on them. The Colonel had obtained the Wetumpka only by agreeing to run her himself, and by paying a large price for her, quite as much as she could have made after paying her expenses, if she had gone on the line.

I was a little uneasy when I found she was not at Welaka. She did not draw over two feet of water when not loaded, and I was confident she could come through with Washburn at the wheel. I had left it to the mate of the Sylvania to start with his charge at whatever time best suited him. Both Moses Brickland and Ben Bowman had been offered double the wages I paid them when we arrived at Jacksonville, and had refused the offer. I could think of nothing but the want of an engineer that would prevent Washburn from coming through on time.

While I was thinking about it, and worrying a

little, I heard some one on deck say she was coming; and I felt ashamed of myself for doubting, even for a moment, the loyalty of Ben Bowman. I left my room and went aft. I saw one of those peculiar Florida boats coming around the bend below us. I sent for my spy-glass, and soon made out the name of the Wetumpka on the pilot-house. In ten minutes more she came alongside the Sylvania.

I had not seen the craft I was to command before, and I had no little curiosity to look her over. Washburn received me when I went on board, and we shook hands, for we had been separated for nearly two days, a longer time than for months before.

"What makes you so late? I was afraid something had happened to you," I began.

"Are we not on time?" asked the mate. "We were to be here on Monday forenoon; and it is only eleven o'clock."

"I thought you were to be here in the morning."

"We could not be here very early in the morning without running on Sunday, or incurring the risk of running aground in the dark," replied Washburn with a yawn. "The moon did not rise till one this morning. We slept on board last

night, and left Jacksonville at one. We have kept her going very lively all the time."

"All right; I am entirely satisfied. What sort of a craft is she?" I continued.

"She is not such a craft as the Sylvania, but she is all right for a river boat. She has made very good time," replied Washburn, as he seated himself on the forward deck.

He looked tired, and gaped several times as he was talking to me. He looked as though he had had a hard time of it.

"I hope you are not sick, Washburn," I said, in commiserating tones.

"Not at all. I slept about four hours last night, and have been at the wheel of the boat ten hours on a stretch. That's all that ails me; and I shall be as good as new when I have had a nap."

"Have you had anything to eat to-day?" I asked, thinking the crew of the Wetumpka had been on duty so that they had not had time to get any meals.

"Plenty to eat. I laid in a stock of cold ham, chickens, and coffee for the trip."

"You and those who came up with you had better go on board of the Sylvania and turn in, while the rest of us transfer the baggage and stores to this boat," I added.

I called Moses, and asked him to take charge of the engine of the river boat, and sent the three hands from her to their bunks. The curiosity of the passengers and crew of the Sylvania was equal to my own. The party from the cabin rushed on board of the Wetumpka as soon as they found she was alongside, and we all went into an examination of her. She was a "twin boat:" that is, she had two hulls, like a "catamaran." They were flat-bottomed, so as to draw but little water. On these two hulls were laid a platform, which came to a point at the bow, and projected some distance forward of the stems of the two boats. On the main deck, no one would suspect that she was composed of two boats.

The paddle-wheel was between the two hulls, and near the stern of the craft. The engine was on deck, and the upper part of the paddle-wheel was boxed up above the main deck. She had a broad opening on each side of her lower deck, through which she could receive her wood and freight. Forward of these doors were the quarters for the crew on one side, and the kitchen and ice-house on the other.

Above the main deck was the saloon deck, with the pilot-house at the forward end of it. In front

of this was a platform on which the passengers could sit, the pilot looking out over their heads. In the saloon were eight state-rooms on a side, which were small, but very comfortably fitted up. At the stern was a pantry and a little smoking-room. The saloon was neatly furnished, and I thought our passengers could be very comfortable on board of the Wetumpka for a couple of weeks. The steward and his force were busy getting ready for dinner; but I set the deck-hands to moving the baggage of the passengers at once.

After dinner the stores were removed on board of the river steamer, and by two in the afternoon we were ready to start up the Ocklawaha, which was to be the first of the two trips. We towed the Sylvania out into deep water, anchored her, and left her in charge of Ben Bowman and Dyer Perkins, for one engineer and one fireman were sufficient for the trip. Cornwood took the wheel, and we ran into the Ocklawaha. In a few hours we were in the woods, the trees of which were loaded with trailing moss, which, however, was no new thing to us, as we had seen it in Savannah, and all the way up the St. Johns. In places the shores were submerged, but the channel of the river was clearly defined by the shrubs and masses

of vines, many of them covered with flowers of various colors. The water was very clear, and not a breath of air ruffled its surface. Everything above it was reflected as in a mirror, and the young ladies were in ecstasies at the beauty of the forest, the vines, and the water.

Occasionally the river widened out into a broad pool, with sandy shores. In one of these we encountered a raft of lumber, on its way to Jacksonville. The men on it were wiry, hatchet-faced fellows, good-natured and easy-going. Just before sunset we came to Silver Spring Run, into which the pilot turned the boat. If the water had been clear before, it was perfectly transparent in this run, or stream flowing from the spring. We could see the fish in the water, sixty feet down. After dark we moored to a wharf for the night.

CHAPTER XXVII.

UP THE OCKLAWAHA TO LAKE GRIFFIN.

THE spring in which we were moored was a pond covering several acres, from which the run, nine miles in length, conveys its waters to the Ocklawaha. It was so dark when we made fast the night before, that we could not tell exactly in what sort of a place we were.

"This spring is said to be the Fountain of Youth, which Ponce de Leon looked after," said Cornwood, as our passengers gathered on deck in front of the pilot-house, after breakfast. "Out in the middle of this pool, the water is eighty feet deep."

"I never saw so large a volume of clear water; and it is a great pity that Ponce de Leon didn't find it, though it probably would not have made the old gentleman any younger," added Colonel Shepard. "What sort of a fish is it I see in this pond, with a long nose?"

"That is the gar-fish; but it is of no account.

He is more like an alligator than a common fish. There is an alligator-gar at the South. But our best fish are not to be found to any great extent in these waters, which are stirred up every day by steamers and rafts. In the upper waters of the St. Johns you will find the best fish and game, though there is plenty of both up this stream."

The party landed, and found on shore a village in the midst of the forest, with stores and a hotel. In the vicinity were cotton and sugar plantations, with many Northern settlers engaged in orange-growing and raising early vegetables for the Northern markets. At the landing, crates of green peas and cucumbers were ready for the steamer, which in less than twenty-four hours could land them in Jacksonville. But we were not much interested in examining the commercial features of the place, and after we had looked over a few orange-groves and fields of bananas, we returned on board. A steamer had just arrived from below, and it was a busy scene at the landing.

"That steamer must have come up in the night," said Mr. Tiffany, as we went on board of the Wetumpka."

"O, yes; steamers run in the night up the Ocklawaha," replied Cornwood.

"But they can see nothing, even in a moonlight night, under the trees that shade the stream in so many places," added the English gentleman.

"On the forward part of the boat they have fires of light wood, which illuminate their course for some distance ahead. They don't all get up here so easy as we did, for they are generally heavily loaded and draw a foot more water, which makes a difference in the navigation. During a considerable portion of the year, Silver Springs is the head of navigation on this river; but freight is brought down from Leesburg in barges, which Yankees call scows."

"But how do they move the scows?"

"With setting-poles, assisted by the current of the river. This place is only five miles from Ocala, to which a railroad has been laid out, though it may be years before it is built," replied Cornwood. "We are in the very heart of Florida now. It is not more than thirty-five miles to Gainesville, to which a stage runs from Ocala three times a week; and that place is on the railroad to Cedar Keys. We are forty-five miles from the Gulf of Mexico, and sixty from the Atlantic. It is thirty miles in a straight line to the St. Johns River, at the southern point of Lake George."

Steam was up on the Wetumpka, and we cast off the fasts from the landing-pier. All the party were on the main deck, looking down into the deep, clear water. The young ladies screamed forth their delight at the reflected objects in the water, and at the fish on the bottom, eighty feet down. We entered the run, and in another hour we were stemming the gentle tide of the Ocklawaha again. The stream was somewhat narrower than below the spring, from which it receives a large volume of water.

"Forward, there!" shouted Cornwood from the pilot-house.

"On deck, sir!" returned Buck Lingley, who was on duty there.

"Stand by with the pole."

Buck seized a pole, of which there were several on the forecastle; but he had no idea what he was to do with it, for he was a salt-water sailor. Cobbington was sitting on the deck, and saw that the deck-hand was puzzled by the situation, and took another pole to assist and show the old salt what to do. At about this time we were driven from our position forward of the saloon by the overhanging branches of the trees and the trailing vines. Cornwood had struck the bell, and the

paddle-wheel stopped. But the steamer went ahead until the bow struck the bank of the stream. Overhead the trees met, and formed an arch above us, and the long vines were caught in various parts of the boat.

It seemed to me that we were in a bad scrape, and I looked to the pilot to ascertain if he considered the situation a difficult one. He did not seem to me to be at all disturbed, and I thought it was not worth while to make any outcry. I went down on the main-deck. I found the water was very shallow in the middle of the river, and Cornwood had taken the side where the greatest depth was to be had, though we were thereby more snarled up in the branches of the trees than we should have been if we had hugged the other side of the stream.

At this point the river made a sharp turn, inclining to an acute angle; and the current flowed by the longest way around the bend. Cobbington struck his pike-pole into a tree on the shore, and Buck followed his example. They shoved the head of the boat off, so that she pointed up the stream, while an occasional turn of the wheel was given to send her ahead. The vines and branches snapped and twanged as they broke or slipped

from the parts of the boat where they were caught. In a few minutes we were clear of the obstructions, though we had to work the boat around the bends, and through masses of trees in this way, at least twenty times in the course of the forenoon.

The river was full of alligators, and our sportsmen amused themselves by firing at them, but with no great success, for the wabbling of the boat nterfered with their aim. About one o'clock we came to a landing-place, where a few logs had been laid and tied into the sand to form a sort of wharf. On the bank was a shanty, and we concluded to stop for a while and have a run on shore, as the ground seemed to be high enough to give us standing room. Dinner was ready, and as soon as we had disposed of it we went on the wharf.

We walked through the woods a short distance, and then came to an orange-grove, with fields of corn six inches high, and sugar-cane of the same height. Across these fields we could see a house, but we did not care to visit it. The woods were full of flowers, and the ladies gathered bouquets to adorn the cabin. I was assisting Miss Margie in this pleasant occupation, when I suddenly heard a rattling sound just ahead of me.

The young lady was between me and the spot

from which the sound came. Near her was Chloe, for we did not think it was necessary to confine her to the boats in these wilds of the interior. I did not believe that Griffin Leeds had followed us farther than Pilatka, though I had neither seen nor heard from him since we left him tied to the railing of the pier at Orange Park.

"Run away from there, Miss Margie! This way!" screamed Chloe, with energy. "Come to me, missy!"

Though I had no idea what the matter was, I concluded to retreat in the same direction. The scream of the stewardess brought up the rest of the party, who demanded the cause of the outcry.

"That was a rattlesnake in there!" exclaimed Chloe. "I know his music well enough."

"I should like to see him," said Owen, who had brought his gun with him for the chance of any game he might see.

I picked up a stick, and went with him. As we approached the spot where we had been before, the rattling was renewed.

"Look out, Mr. Owen! That snake will jump six feet, and bite as quick as a flash," screamed Chloe.

"There he is," said Hop Tossford, when we were within twenty feet of the reptile.

He was coiled up in a heap, and looked like a very large snake. He was shaking all over, apparently with anger at being disturbed by our approach; and it was this motion that shook the rattles in his tail. While we were looking at him he made a leap which brought him within twelve or fourteen feet of us, and again coiled himself up for another spring. Owen aimed his gun, and fired into the centre of the coil. The rattlesnake whirled and wriggled for a moment, and then lay still. We could see that his head had been torn all to pieces by the shot, and he was as dead as it was possible for a snake to be. We straightened him out, and found that he was six feet long. When positively assured that he was dead, the ladies came up and examined him. But he was not a pleasant sight to look upon, and a glance or two satisfied them. They wanted no more flowers, and insisted upon going on board at once.

As we started for the boat, we met a gentleman coming down the path from the house to the landing. He proved to be the owner of the plantation, who had come down to see what steamer was at the wharf. He invited us to his house, and

would be delighted to have us stay a week; but we felt obliged to decline the invitation with many thanks.

"I should not dare to stay here even a day," said Miss Margie.

"Why not, miss?" asked the gentleman, who was a native of South Carolina.

"Mr. Garningham has just killed a monstrous rattlesnake; and I should be afraid of my life to stay where they are," replied the English maiden.

"We don't mind them at all," replied the gentleman, laughing. "I have lived here ten years, and not one of our people has ever been bitten by a rattlesnake. In fact, I hardly ever heard of such a thing as any one being bitten by a rattlesnake. There are three times as many deaths from suicide in the South, as from the bites of moccasins and rattlesnakes put together. You get used to them in a little while, and don't mind anything more about them than you do the mocking birds that sing day and night."

"I don't like them at all," added Miss Margie.

"I can't say that I like them," continued the gentleman. "I make a business of killing them when I come across them. I have no doubt the snake you killed was the one that came into my

house the other day. We had a big hunt for him, and couldn't find him; and I am very much obliged to the gentleman that shot him. Very likely we shall not see another one for a year."

The gentleman walked with us to the landing, and waited there till the Wetumpka was out of sight. At five o'clock in the afternoon we entered Lake Griffin, which I judged to be about ten miles long, and moored at Leesburg in season for supper. This place is the county-town of Sumter County, and the head of navigation by the Ocklawaha. One end of the town was on Lake Hawkins, and there were a dozen lakes within a few miles of it. We found nothing very different from what we had seen. Our sportsmen brought in large quantities of small game, upon which we feasted, and we sailed about the lake, exchanging hospitalities with the people who treated us like old friends.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

AN EXPEDITION TO INDIAN RIVER.

AFTER spending three days at Leesburg, we started on Friday noon, March 22, as I find it in my diary, which I kept in place of the log-book of the Sylvania, on our trip down the river. In order to get the fullest idea of travelling on the Ocklawaha, Cobbington rigged out the sheet iron pans, with which the boat was provided for burning light wood, and other combustibles that would give a bright blaze, and the run was continued till midnight. The effect was exceedingly picturesque; and the ladies, wrapped in their shawls and water-proofs, were delighted with the view of the forest, illuminated by the bright fires. The trees, the trailing moss, and the openings in the woods assumed weird shapes, and the alligators were as frisky as though they were attending a grand ball.

At midnight, the ladies began to yawn, and had evidently seen enough of the dazzling spectacle;

and the boat was moored to a tree for the rest of the night. At daylight we were moving again, and in the middle of the forenoon we reached the mouth of the river, and ran alongside of the Sylvania. We found our ship-keepers in good condition; but both of them wanted to go with us up the St. Johns, and I had not the heart to refuse them. I hired a reliable man to take charge of the Sylvania, and on Monday morning, at daylight, we began the trip.

"I don't think we want to stop at all these towns on the river," said Owen, who put in an appearance on deck about six, with Colonel Shepard. "We have seen enough of the little places, and I dare say there is nothing but a shop and a post-office at any of them."

"Just as you please," I replied. "We can be at the head of navigation on this river to-night, if you say so. But we are just going into Lake George, and I think you had better call the ladies, for I am told the scenery is very fine."

But the ladies began to come out of their room before we had time to call them. The lake was simply a widening of the river for eighteen miles to a breadth of twelve miles. It was not very different from the lower St. Johns, except that it

was studded with islands, and was twice its width. On the largest of the islands is an extensive orange-grove. As there were no difficulties in the navigation of the lake, Cornwood called Buck to the wheel, and joined the party on the outer deck. He pointed out the herons, curlew, cranes, paroquets, and other birds. When he said it was fine fishing in the lake, our sportsmen had their trolling lines overboard. Ten fine black bass were taken; and at "seven bells," a portion of them were on the breakfast table. We all took our meals at the same table on the Wetumpka, though not at the same time.

As we sat in front of the pilot-house, Cornwood pointed out all the objects of interest, and named the towns we passed. But nature was more to our taste than any village, after we had obtained an idea of the average town in Florida. We did not stop all day long, except to run into the stream that flows from Blue Spring, to note the marvellous clearness of the water. At four in the afternoon we passed into Lake Monroe, which is the head of navigation. On it are located the three towns of Sanford, Mellonville, and Enterprise, at the last of which we made a landing. This place I had heard spoken of as the "paradise of sports-

men," and the headquarters of all who desire to hunt and fish in this part of the state.

For a change, the passengers went on shore and stopped at the Brock House over night. Cornwood went with them, but he returned about nine o'clock. I was reading some letters I had obtained at the post-office; but none came from my father, and I had become quite anxious about him.

"What do your passengers wish to do, captain?" asked Cornwood, as he joined us in the cabin.

"They intend to hunt and fish a few days; and they want to get at it to-morrow morning," I replied.

"There is not much game about here, I am told. I have talked with several of the old guides, and they say this part of the country has been hunted out," continued Cornwood.

"Where shall we go, then?"

"I find there have been heavy rains down south of us, and that the streams are high. We can certainly go as far as Lake Harney, and perhaps thirty or forty miles farther. That would bring us to a country where the sportsmen seldom go; and there you will find plenty of deer, wild turkeys, and ducks. But I want to show you some

better fishing than you have seen in Florida, or in any other place."

"Where shall that be?" I asked, curiously.

"In the salt water."

"In the salt water!" I exclaimed. "Certainly you can't get to the salt water in the Wetumpka."

"We cannot; but if we can get seven or eight miles above Lake Harney, as I think we can, we may cross the land to Titusville, on Indian River. There we can find boats, and do some of the biggest fishing you ever heard of, to say nothing of the shooting."

"How far is it across the land?" I inquired.

"Not more than nine or ten miles."

"We can walk that distance easy enough."

"The ladies can't walk nine miles."

"I think we had better go on shore and consult Colonel Shepard and Mr. Garningham," I added; and we started to do so.

Our passengers, even the ladies, were enthusiastic for the plan. They all wanted to go across to the salt water. Before we went on board we had engaged four mules and two wagons, which were to be taken on board of the steamer the next morning. I had every sort of fishing-tackle in abundance, and both the colonel and Owen had

complete outfits of rods and reels, with a vast variety of lines, hooks, squids, sinkers, gaffs, and landing-nets. Each of them had two sporting pieces, and all the equipments of a hunter.

Before six in the morning, the mules appeared on the wharf, drawing the wagons, which were nothing but "hay-riggings." They had stakes and rails, so that seats could be put on them. Of course the mules made a row about going on board; but they went, for all that. We took in an abundance of forage and grain for them. We did not consider it necessary to take any drivers, who would only increase the load for the mules. At seven the passengers appeared. The native guides and sportsmen said we were going off on a "wild goose chase"; to which Cornwood replied that he should catch the goose and bring him back to Enterprise. I rather liked his pluck, and determined to do the best I could to make the enterprise a success.

We were under way as soon as possible, and had no difficulty in getting to Lake Harney, in which the water was not more than three feet deep in many places. But that, and even less, was enough for us, for it gave one foot clear under the sterns of the twin boats.

Owen Aimed his Gun and Fired.—Page 280.

"Now comes the tug of war," said Cornwood, as we entered the river above the lake. "The water looks very high to me, but the bottom shifts. Will you station a deck-hand on each side of the boat to sound, captain?"

I went down to the main deck, and placed Buck on one side, and Hop on the other. They were provided with poles, marked off in feet. I had seen them used by other boats on the Ocklawaha, and so had the deck-hands. The poles were ten feet long, but they were to report no depths above four feet; for if we had four feet, it made no difference how much deeper the water was.

"No bottom!" called both of them, for some time; then, "Four feet."

"Three feet!" shouted Hop, when we had gone about two miles.

Cornwood rang the speed bell, and the boat slowed down to five miles an hour.

"Two feet and a half!" cried Buck, the next moment.

The pilot rang the gong, for there was not more than six inches of water under the stern. The Wetumpka continued to go ahead. The pilot did not ring to back the paddle-wheel, and the deck-

hands both reported two feet and a half, several times in succession.

"A stream comes in there," said Cornwood, pointing to the mouth of a creek on the left bank; "that run of water has made a shoal here."

"Three feet!" called Hop; and the same call was repeated by Buck; and the pilot rang to go ahead at full speed.

In a short time it was "No bottom" again; and we went along very nicely for about five miles. Here we had to slow down again, and then stop her. The deck-hands got down to two feet and a half. When Hop said two feet, Cornwood rang to back her. This was the draft of the boat aft. One of the flat-boats which were stowed away aft, and which we had had no occasion to use before, was put into the water, and with Buck I went ahead, with a sounding-pole in my hand. I followed the two feet depth for about a rod, and then came to three feet, and soon after to "no bottom." I shouted to the pilot the result of my examination of the stream, and Buck pulled back to the steamer. We got on board and made fast the painter of the flat-boat, letting it tow astern, for we might soon need it again.

Cornwood ran the Wetumpka back for some

distance, and then went ahead at full steam. If the boat stuck, he intended to force her over the shoal, which was not more than a rod in breadth. She went over without even scraping the sand. If she had been loaded with freight, she could have gone no farther. After going a couple of miles more, the pilot ran the boat up to the shore, which was almost the only place we had seen for miles where the banks of the river were not swampy, with the roots of the bushes under water. It was a pine forest on the eastern shore, with no underbrush.

"This looks like the right place," said Cornwood, after he had directed the deck-hands to carry the bow fasts ashore and catch a turn around the trees. Then he looked about him, as if he was trying to identify the place. "I wish I had the latitude," he added.

"We can give you that, for I have my instruments in my room. I brought them because I was afraid they might be stolen," I replied.

I got the instruments, and took an observation from the hurricane-deck of the steamer; and Washburn figured it up. "28° 37′ 55″," said the mate, when he had completed and verified his calculation.

"That's it, almost to a hair line," said Cornwood, laughing. "Parallel section line 21 runs through Titusville. We are in east section 33, and south section 21. We are all right, and you may land your mules."

He referred to the land sections of the state, of which I had no knowledge. We laid down the planks, and got the mules ashore, and then the wagons. It was only ten o'clock, and we wished to reach our destination by noon. In a few minutes, our hands, under the direction of the pilot, succeeded in harnessing the mules to the wagons. We put six persons in each, with their bags and sporting apparatus. All hands wanted to go with us, but we could not take any of them. We had the same sand for roads as in the streets of Jacksonville. Cornwood drove one team, and I drove the other. Half a mile from the river, we found a settler in a log house, who seemed to be greatly astonished at our sudden appearance, and insisted on knowing how we got there. We told him, and in reply he informed us that the woods were full of game, and no sportsman had been that way for a year.

We reached our destination at noon. Titusville consisted of only a few houses; but the party were gladly taken in by the settlers.

CHAPTER XXIX.

A MYSTERIOUS SHOT.

INDIAN RIVER, Halifax River, Mosquito Lagoon, and half a dozen rivers, sounds, lagoons, lakes, and inlets on the Atlantic coast of Florida, are different names for the same shallow body of water, separated from the main ocean by a narrow strip of sand, which extends north and south for two hundred miles. Indian River extends from about twenty-five miles north of Titusville to the inlet, a distance of one hundred miles. But Banana River and Mosquito Inlet are separated from it only by Merritt's Island, so that these bodies of water overlap each other. The water in these inlets is often not more than three feet deep, so that no large vessels can navigate them.

A few years ago a company was formed, having for its purpose the deepening of the upper St. Johns as far as Lake Washington, about forty miles south of the point where the Wetumpka lay, and cutting a canal across to Indian River, not

more than eight miles. No progress, however, seems to have been made in the enterprise.

We found three cat-rigged boats at Titusville, which we had no difficulty in procuring. The ladies would not allow us to leave them at the settlement, though Cornwood intimated that we might have a rough time of it. Mr. Garbrook, Cornwood, and myself served as skippers, and we were all thoroughly acquainted with the business. The boats were about the size of the Lakebird, in which I had voyaged in the roughest weather of Lake St. Clair; and as we had only four persons in each boat, we were not crowded. I had Colonel Shepard, Mr. and Miss Tiffany in the boat with me.

Our first business was to obtain a supply of bait, which was easily procured with our landing-nets, and consisted of small mullet and other little fish, which had to be kept alive. The ladies were in excellent spirits, and even Mrs. Shepard, who had been an invalid for years, entered fully into the spirit of the occasion. When I first met this lady in Portland, she was hardly able to move without assistance; but latterly she seemed to need no aid from any one. She had taken part in all our frolics and excursions, and her appetite was

equal to that of any person in the party. But no one could be sick in such a delicious climate as this was, for we spent all our time in the open air.

Our fishing was to be done mainly by trolling, and as soon as we had our bait, Colonel Shepard had a mullet on one of his approved squids. We had a six-knot breeze, and I had to attend to the tiller. The bait was hardly in the water before the Colonel began to tug at his line. I saw a large fish break in the water, a hundred feet from the boat, and "cut up" in the most extraordinary manner. The New Yorker labored diligently for some time, and I luffed up the boat in order to lessen his labors; but before he got the fish near enough to enable us to see what he was, the patent gear snapped, and away went the fish.

I had provided Mr. Tiffany with a line from Lake Superior, and he had a fish on before the Colonel had finished his labors with the first one. This line was strong enough to hold anything in the water, and the English gentleman, with my assistance, pulled in a redfish, or spotted bass, which weighed fourteen pounds. I rigged a line for Miss Margie, and she soon brought into the boat without help, which she would not allow any one to give, a sea-trout, similar to the squeteague

or weakfish, but not the same thing. In the other boats they were having the same luck.

Towards night we began to pull in red snappers from six to twelve pounds in weight. They were perfect beauties, vermilion on the back, the color gradually changing to pink on the belly. The Colonel was all worn out with his exertions, and he was glad to exchange his line for the tiller of the boat, and I took a hand in the exciting sport. But we were catching more than we could use, and we landed at a settlement called Eau Gallie just before dark, where we were glad to pass the night.

We stayed two days longer in this delightful region. Every time we went out fishing we averaged a hundred weight of fish to each line. We sent five hundred weight across to the Wetumpka, on board of which we had tons of ice, to be packed for future use. The Colonel was sorry to leave such magnificent fishing, and Owen declared that he would spend all the winters of the rest of his life in the southern part of Florida.

On Thursday morning we harnessed up our mule teams, and started across the land for the river. At the end of the week we were to finish our trip in Florida; but we were to give two or three days to hunting in the vicinity of the point

An Expedition to Indian River. Page 292.

where the steamer lay. On our way back through the forest we saw game in abundance. On our arrival the mules were picketed in the woods, for we did not like the music of their stamping on the planks of the forward deck. We reached the boat an hour before dinner-time, and Gopher had red snapper and spotted bass in a variety of styles for the meal. In the afternoon the gentlemen took to the woods with their sporting gear, but I remained to escort the ladies and protect them from rattle-snakes and moccasins, which they seemed to fear every time they set foot on shore. But we did not see a snake of any kind during the whole time we were on the waters of the upper St. Johns. At three o'clock I had the mules harnessed to one of the wagons, and drove the ladies several miles into the forest; they were delighted with the excursion.

On my return, when the ladies had gone up into the saloon, I went aft on the main deck to take a look at the water. The steamer was moored with her head to the shore, so that her stern was out in the river. I was afraid, as we had had no rain for some days, not even a shower, that the river would fall so as to endanger our getting over the shoal, two miles below, where we had not had more than

an inch to spare in coming up. I measured the depth where I had done it every day I had been on board since our arrival, and I found it was two inches lower. I was rather alarmed, for I did not like the idea of spending several weeks in this locality, excellent as the hunting was, for I knew that the party would soon tire of it.

While I stood at the stern thinking of it, I heard a noise which I thought came from the inside of the paddle-box. I listened for some time but did not hear it again, and I concluded that a young alligator, or some other water animal, had crawled into the opening.

I started to return to the stairs which led from the main deck forward to the space in front of the saloon. I was passing between two piles of light-wood on my way, when I heard the report of a pistol. A bullet whistled uncomfortably near my head. I don't claim to be bullet-proof, and I was startled by the sound, and by the whizzing of the ball so near my head. I made up my mind on the instant that the shot was intended for me, and that my life was in actual danger. Buck and Hop were attending to the mules on shore, and I saw no one on the lower deck.

Moses Brickland and Ben Bowman were in their

rooms, and I called them. I told them what had happened. They had heard the shot; but some one was shooting about all the time in the vicinity of the boat, and they paid no attention to such sounds. We searched every part of the lower deck, even opening the trap into the paddle-box, made to allow a workman to get in when repairs were necessary. We could find no person.

"I believe this steamer is haunted, and I wouldn't sail in her another month if you would give her to me," said Ben, who was not a highly-educated person, though he knew a steam-engine as well as though he had been through college. "I have heard all sorts of noises by night and by day."

"What sort of noises, Ben?" I asked with interest, not that I was impressed with the idea that the Wetumpka was haunted.

"Well, footsteps where no person could be found," replied the engineer. "Now, you say you have been fired at, and no one on board could have done it."

"I don't believe ghosts use fire-arms, Ben," I added, as I saw Cornwood come on the forward deck.

He had been hunting with the sportsmen, to

assist them with his knowledge of the game of the country. The moment he saw us he hastened aft, and asked me what the matter was. As we had not exhibited to him the evidences that anything was the matter, I was rather surprised at the question.

"Nothing is the matter, except that a shot was fired at me a little while ago," I replied, as though it were a matter of not much consequence.

"I think you are mistaken," he replied very promptly.

"How could I be mistaken when the ball whistled by my head?" I demanded.

"It might not have been within ten feet of your head, though it sounded as though it were within a few inches. I shot a wild turkey as I came up, and I fired in the direction of the steamer. It occurred to me that the ball might have gone through her, and I confess that I was very careless," replied Cornwood.

"I think you were, extremely careless," I added coldly.

"But I am sure the ball could not have gone within ten feet of you, or I should have seen you," protested the guide.

"Where is the turkey you shot?" asked Ben,

wl appeared to have some doubts in regard to the truth of the story.

"I threw him down on the forecastle as I came on board," answered Cornwood.

We walked to that part of the steamer, and there lay the wild turkey, as handsome a bird as I had ever seen. This evidence satisfied me, for as the Floridian had never failed to do anything he promised, or disappointed the party in regard to fish and game, he was in high favor with all on board, at least with those in the cabin.

"Colonel Shepard and Mr. Garningham have shot no end of deer and wild turkey, and they have stacked the game about two miles from the landing," continued the guide. "They have more than we could bring, and I volunteered to come up for a mule team."

"Buck and Hop are taking care of the pair we used this afternoon; you can take the others," I replied.

Cornwood went on shore, and in a short time I saw him drive down the shore into the woods.

"Do you believe that story about the wild turkey?" asked Ben, when Cornwood had gone ashore.

"I see no reason to disbelieve it," I replied, looking with interest at the engineer.

"Do you? Well, I don't; and I didn't believe it when he told it," replied Ben, as he pointed with his jack-knife at a place in the wild turkey which he had partly dissected. "Do you see that?"

"I do not see anything but blood and meat," I answered.

"You don't! Well, there is the ball that whistled within ten feet of your head when you were walking on the main deck."

Ben Bowman applied his knife-blade to the turkey, and pried out the bullet, which had lodged against the breastbone.

I took it in my hand. If his story was true, this was not the ball that passed near my head. We made another search for the man who had fired at me, but we looked in vain.

CHAPTER XXX.

SHOOTING IN THE FOREST AND BEING SHOT.

BEFORE supper-time, the mule team came in with a load of game. Washburn had gone out with the sportsmen this time, for during my absence he would not leave the steamer for a moment. I counted seventeen deer, the smallest kind I had ever seen, and twenty-one wild turkeys. The next day the sport was resumed, and I joined the party. At the suggestion of Colonel Shepard, we took a couple of landing-nets, though what for I could not imagine. But we had not gone half a mile before I discovered the use of them.

The woods were full of young quails, which in the South are called partridges, the latter taking the name of pheasants. These quails ran in flocks of a dozen or less, and with the landing-nets we could cover the whole brood. We gathered them up, and put them into a large basket, with a cover, which we had brought with us for the purpose.

We went several miles farther south than the party of the day before had gone; and the shooting was so abundant as to be "rather too much of a good thing." Before noon we had all we wanted, and it seemed to be wicked to shoot any more. The sportsmen from Enterprise had not been up as far as this, and the game had hardly ever been disturbed in its haunts.

I was tired of the sport before the others, and I started back for the mule team about eleven. I was within two miles of the landing, as I judged, for we had to estimate all our distances, when I heard the crack of a revolver or a rifle. At the same instant I felt a burning sensation in the back of the neck. I placed my hand upon the place, and found that a ball had just grazed it. My hand was covered with blood when I removed it.

I expected another shot would follow immediately, and I raised my gun, which was loaded with ball, and looked about me. I deemed it prudent to dodge behind a magnolia, of which there was an occasional one in the forest. I could judge from the situation of the wound on my neck from what direction the ball had come. My getting behind the tree had deranged the calculations of the intended assassin. He stood at a distance of

not more than sixty feet from me, pointing a rifle towards me.

It was Griffin Leeds.

Though I could have shot him, I preferred to be killed rather than to kill. But before I could do anything, or even consider what to do, another actor appeared on the stage. I saw Griffin Leeds look behind him once, as though he feared an interruption, and doubtless he heard the step of the third person. Until the stranger was close upon the octoroon, I had not seen him. In the soft sand that formed the soil of the forest, one could hardly hear the sounds of approaching footsteps.

The stranger stepped from behind a large pine-tree, and before I had recovered from my surprise at his appearance, he fell upon Griffin Leeds, handling him with an ease that astonished me. He flung him on the ground like an unclean bird, and then pointed his own rifle at his head.

It was entirely safe for me under these circumstances to leave my hiding-place, and I walked towards the scene of the last encounter. I kept my gun in position for use, though I was not at all inclined to fire upon a human being. I wondered who had thus interfered to save me from the bullet of Griffin Leeds. Then I wondered

how Griffin Leeds happened to be in the woods, miles above the head of ordinary navigation. I thought of my wound, and placed my hand upon it. It was beginning to feel very sore, and the blood was still flowing very freely from it. I bound my handkerchief around my neck, but I found it difficult to cover the place.

I had been shot at the day before. Was it not probable that the same person had fired both shots? Then I thought of the noise I had heard while I was measuring the depth of the river. There was some hiding-place in the after part of the Wetumpka which we had not yet discovered. In that place Griffin Leeds had been concealed, perhaps from the time we left Welaka, on our trip up the Ocklawaha. This seemed to me to be a satisfactory solution of this part of the mystery. I was so well satisfied that I did not care to hear any evidence on the subject. I could not have understood it any better if all the details had been given to me under oath.

But it was plain enough to me that Griffin Leeds could not have existed in his hiding-place for nearly two weeks, or even one, without the connivance of some person on board. Of course that person was Cornwood.

Who was the stranger that interfered to save me? I concluded he was some hunter, who had taken a hand in the affair simply from the love of fair play. I walked towards him, and soon came near enough to note his appearance. He wore a long beard, and was dressed in a common travelling suit.

"Get up, you villain!" said the stranger, as I approached.

Griffin Leeds did not wait for a second command, but sprang to his feet. He looked at me, and he saw that I had a gun in my hand. I aimed at him.

"Take your hand from your pocket!" I called to him.

He did so; but the stranger sprang upon him again. Putting his hand into the side-pocket of his sack-coat, he drew from it a small revolver. Not satisfied with this, he continued the search, and took from another pocket a knife like that the wretch had attempted to use on board of the Sylvania. He was then satisfied that the fellow was entirely disarmed.

"I am exceedingly obliged to you for the service you have rendered me," I began. "This is not the first trouble I have had with this —"

"Never mind that, my dear Alick," interposed my deliverer.

Before I had an opportunity to look at him again, he had folded me in his arms as though I were a little girl, instead of a strapping big boy, weighing one hundred and fifty. I had no need to conjecture any longer who my deliverer was. It was my father.

The tears rolled down his cheeks, as they did down mine when I saw them. But he was hardly changed since I last saw him. I was so happy at this reunion that I forgot everything else. I dare say we both indulged in exclamations. While we were using them, Griffin Leeds began to move off. I pointed my gun at him.

"Go to that magnolia, and stand on this side of it: and if you attempt to run away, I will shoot you!" I added; but I don't think I meant half of it.

The octoroon doggedly obeyed. I looked at my father, whom I had supposed to be dead for months of the period that had separated us. He had been to England and to India since we parted. I had roamed thousands of miles, believing all the time that I was earning my daily bread.

"We meet at last!" exclaimed my father. "I

find you in deadly peril, and come at the moment when I may save you!"

"I was shot at before to-day; and I am afraid I have a traitor on either hand wherever I go;" and I explained in as few words as possible about Cornwood and Griffin Leeds, expressing my belief that the pilot was the agent of Captain Boomsby.

"That old villain still believes I am dead," replied my father. "I went into his saloon in Jacksonville, but he did not know me. I talked about you; and he said you had a steamer that belonged to him, and he should have possession of her in a couple of weeks. He insisted that he was your guardian. I did not undeceive him."

"We had better walk back to the steamer, father," — how dear the name sounded to me! "What shall we do with that fellow?" I pointed at Griffin Leeds.

"Let him march ahead of us."

We started Griffin Leeds, and followed him back to the river. On the way I told my father all that happened since I came to Florida in March, including my suspicions in regard to Cornwood, and the evidence I had against him.

"Don't think any more about him, or the wretch ahead of us. I shall take command of this expe-

dition from this time; and you know I have been a major in the English army," said my father, smiling.

"Why didn't you write to me, father? It is a long time since I heard a word from you," I asked.

"I did not write to you in January because you were away, and could not get my letters. I did not write to you in February, because I expected to see you before any letter could reach you. I expected to be in Jacksonville the last of February; but when I was half-way to New York the steamer broke her shaft, and had to return under sail. It was the 8th of March when I sailed the second time from Liverpool. When I got to Jacksonville, I heard that you had gone on a trip up the river. I followed to Pilatka, and was told that you had gone up the Ocklawaha. I took the next boat for that river, but seeing the Sylvania at Welaka, I made further inquiries, and learned that you had gone up the St. Johns. I followed you till I found your steamer. I saw no one on board that I knew, but a man told me you were in the woods hunting, and had gone south of the landing.

"I started to find you; and went along till I came to that fellow skulking through the woods.

I supposed he was going to join your party, and I followed him. I heard the crack of rifles in the distance, about the time I first saw that villain. I concluded it was the firing of the hunters. Suddenly this man raised his rifle and fired. I had not seen you before. You know what happened then. I have only to say, Alick, that I shall not let you out of my sight again."

"I hope you won't, father."

I sent Hop Tossford with the mules, or I did not care to leave my father again. We went on board of the Wetumpka. I called out Moses, and Ben, who knew my father. They were glad to see him for my sake, if not for their own. Buck tied Griffin Leeds to a stanchion on the steamer, for we had driven him on board ahead of us. I was more curious than ever to know where the "ghost" that haunted the lower deck of the Wetumpka had been concealed.

"Where did you hide on board, Griffin?" I asked.

"I don't answer any questions," he replied, in a surly tone.

"All right," I replied, and taking Ben with me, I went aft.

The paddle-box extended almost the whole

width of the boat; and under a pile of rubbish, which had evidently been placed there to conceal it, was a scuttle, leading into the hold of the port twin boat. Raising this, we found a mattress from one of the berths, a blanket, and some dishes. We had not thought of the holds of the twin boats before, for there were two openings near the great gangway into them. We had thrown lightwood down into them, and filled them up. We had not therefore supposed it possible for any one to get into these holds. Here Griffin Leeds had lived, and Cornwood had carried him his meals.

"I think that is the best place for him," said my father, after he had looked into the port hold. "Send him back again, and set a watch over the man Cornwood."

We went up into the saloon after this had been done, and Miss Margie was delighted to see my father. He was introduced to the other ladies as Sir Bent Garningham. About one o'clock, the hunters came in with a bigger load of game than on the day before. They were just in time to escape a tremendous thunder-shower, for the rain began to fall in torrents about the time they entered the cabin. Owen was rather embarrassed

when he saw my father, who however extended to him a cordial greeting. Nothing was said about the occurrences of the past.

Our dinner that day was composed entirely of the fish and game procured by our sportsmen. We had venison in various dishes, and roast turkey of the finest quality. While we were eating, the rain beat down in sheets upon the deck over our heads. The lightning was terrific, and we heard it strike several times in the forest. For two hours it poured, and then the sun came out, and brightened up the dripping scene.

"I found this rifle in the woods," said Washburn, taking the piece from his state-room, where he had put it when he came in.

"That was the one with which Griffin Leeds fired at me," I replied. "I forgot all about it, and left it on the ground. Whose is it?"

He showed it to several, and at last to Cornwood. He hesitated; but finally said it was his, and he had left it in the woods when the team came. Inquiry proved that he had taken no rifle with him. He had no doubt lent it to Griffin Leeds.

We were to have stayed at this landing one day longer, but when I told Owen and Colonel Shep-

ard that the river had fallen two inches in the morning, they decided that it would not be safe to remain any longer. The shower must have raised the river a little; and if we went at once, we might get over. I ordered the mules to be taken on board; and as soon as they and the wagons were shipped, I intimated to Cornwood that we were ready to resume our trip. To my astonishment he protested against going, and declared there would be no difficulty about the water. We had no idea, he insisted, of the game in the woods.

"Cast off the fasts!" I shouted to the deckhands, from my place on the saloon deck.

Cornwood looked in the direction of the woods, and seemed to be greatly troubled. He evidently thought his agent was still in the woods, and I was not disposed to undeceive him. The deckhands hauled the fasts on board, and the boat began to drift down the river. Very reluctantly the pilot went to the wheel, and after some manœuvring got the Wetumpka headed down the river. He still kept one eye on the shore.

My father had dressed my wound as soon as we got on board. It was not much more than a scratch, though it made my neck so stiff for a

couple of days that I could hardly turn it. I had it bound up, and just as the boat was approaching the shoal place, Cornwood asked me what ailed my neck. It was clear enough that he did not know what had transpired in the woods.

"In accordance with the plan you arranged with Captain Boomsby before you came on board of the Sylvania, I have been shot," I replied. "The ball, instead of going through my head, only grazed my neck. Your man is a very bad shot."

"My man! Who is my man?" demanded Cornwood. But I saw that he was pale under the charge.

"Griffin Leeds, of course," I answered. "But you have managed it very clumsily, from the moccasin down to the shooting. You ought to have employed a man that could hit the side of a house at sixty feet."

"I don't understand you," gasped he.

"Yes, you do. But the game is up. The gentleman who came to-day is my father, and Captain Boomsby will give up the chase as soon as he sees and knows him."

"I am sure I don't know what you are talking about."

"Then we won't talk any more," I added, re-

tiring from the pilot-house after the boat had passed over the doubtful shoal, which the rain had rendered harmless.

At seven in the evening we reached Enterprise, where we remained overnight. At daylight the next morning, before any of our passengers were stirring, we started down the river again. At two in the afternoon we were alongside the Sylvania. We merely put Washburn, Ben Bowman, Landy Perkins, and Hop Tossford on board of her, to run her down to Jacksonville, and kept on our way. But it was midnight when we made the wharf of the company that owned the Wetumpka. Except those in charge of the steamer, all were asleep. About daylight, the Sylvania anchored in the berth she had occupied before.

Our fish and game which had been kept in the extra ice-house were in excellent condition. I sent my share to the Carlton Hotel, whose proprietors had been polite to me. I had handed Griffin Leeds over to the police on our arrival. On Monday morning we were all back again on board of the Sylvania, and were glad enough of the change into her. But we had had a magnificent time up the river; all hands were satisfied, and ready for another cruise.

Monday was the first day of April, and Owen came on board to settle his accounts. He insisted upon paying me seven hundred dollars for the month; but my father resented the proposition. He allowed me to take the amount I had received the month before, and no more.

"Owen, you have behaved very badly," said my father seriously.

"I know I have, uncle; but I have repented it, and I hope you will forgive me," replied Owen. "The nobleness of Alick conquered me, and I am a better fellow than I ever was before in my life."

"I have heard what Alick has to say about it; and so far as the past is concerned, I freely forgive you for his sake," added my father.

"I was led away by Mr. Carrington," pleaded Owen.

"No man has any right to be led away by another. It is the devil in his own heart that leads him away, and not another man. Owen, you made a contract with my son when he thought he had nothing in the world but this steamer."

"I did; and I have paid all I agreed to pay."

"And been extremely liberal, father," I added.

"I find no fault; but I annul the contract," said my father. "My son shall be in no one's employ, not even in yours, Owen."

"I should be glad to continue the arrangement to the end of the year," replied Owen.

"No; Alick can go where he pleases with his yacht from this day. He may invite whom he pleases to go with him. But he shall be under nobody's authority but mine."

I was as much astonished at the decision of my father as Owen could be; but I said nothing, and my cousin soon went on shore, for he was staying at the house of Colonel Shepard. We had landed the Garbrooks at Green Cove Springs, where their yacht was waiting for them.

On Tuesday came the trial of Griffin Leeds. Cornwood's defence was weak, and he seemed to have no pluck. His client was convicted of assault with a dangerous weapon, and sentenced to five years; and I suppose he is now serving in some convict gang. Chloe found a permanent place with the Shepards. Cornwood left for St. Augustine as soon as the trial of Griffin Leeds was finished. My father and I called at the saloon of Captain Boomsby, merely to satisfy him that I was not an orphan, and that it would be useless for him to enter into any more conspiracies. I paid Cornwood one hundred and fifty dollars; and I don't know what the captain paid him, but I

think nothing. If he had obtained possession of the Sylvania, he might have collected a heavy fee. As a pilot and guide he was a greater success than as a lawyer.

My story is told, so far as Florida is concerned, for the present, though I did not believe I should be able to pass Indian River Inlet without running in and catching a few of those redfish. With my newly-acquired liberty I was considering where to go next, and whom to invite to go with me. My father spent much of his time with the Hon. Mr. Tiffany, at the Carlton, where I was glad to meet Miss Margie as often, at least, as once a day.

The future was still an open question, though I liked my cousin Owen so well that I did not wish to think of parting with him. I was certainly indebted to him for the pleasure of being "Down South" during the winter, and the magnificent time I had enjoyed during our "Yacht Adventures in Florida."

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